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PARTISAN REVIEW

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1943

The New Failure of Nerve

three articles by

JOHN DEWEY, SIDNEY HOOK and ERNEST NAGEL

LIONEL TRILLING
Of this Time, of that Place (a story)

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS
Relations of Painting and Sculpture

MARY McCARTHY
Theatre: "The Skin of Our Teeth"

POETRY BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS, KENNETH PATCHEN, JOHN FREDERICK NIMS, and L. S. DOUGHTY.

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The Post Office and the Left-Wing Press

an editorial

As many of our readers probably know, the Post Office, apparently at the instigation of the Department of Justice, has been interfering with the mailing of certain left-wing publications: **The Militant, Fourth International,** and **Labor Action.** Some issues have been declared to be unmailable and others have been held up for a week by the Post Office for "inspection," and have then been allowed to go through the mails.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which is protesting the action of the Post Office, states that an examination of recent issues of **The Militant** "discloses no material than can be construed as violating the Espionage Act in the light of previous decisions. . . . The issues contain material criticizing the alleged imperialist phases of the war, the government's labor policy, and Negro discrimination." The Post Office has given no reason for refusing the mails to these papers. Legally, it can hold up every issue of any publication for an indefinite period, after which it can either refuse the mails to it or allow it to pass—and all without giving the victimized papers a hearing or even telling them what articles are considered objectionable and why.

This kind of action is a potential threat to every publication that prints any criticism of the government or of any phase of the war effort. It strikes at free speech in the dark, by an administrative **lettre de cachet,** so to speak. We wish to add our protest to those that have already been voiced against this bureaucratic violation of the most elementary democratic liberties.

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PARTISAN REVIEW

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The New Failure of Nerve

Sidney Hook

Editor's Note: This article is the first in a series on "The New Failure of Nerve." The following two articles in this issue, by John Dewey and Ernest Nagel, continue the discussion. Further articles in the series will appear in the next issue.

IN THE FAMOUS third chapter of his *Four Stages of Greek Religion* Gilbert Murray characterizes the period from 300 B.C. through the first century of the Christian era as marked by "a failure of nerve." This failure of nerve exhibited itself in "a rise of asceticism, of mysticism, in a sense, of pessimism; a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and of faith in normal human efforts; a despair of patient inquiry, a cry for infallible revelation: an indifference to the welfare of the state, a conversion of the soul to God."

A survey of the cultural tendencies of our own times shows many signs pointing to a new failure of nerve in Western civilization. Its manifestations are more complex and sophisticated than in any previous time. It speaks in a modern idiom and employs techniques of expression and persuasion that reflect the ways of a secular culture. But at bottom it betrays, except in one respect, the same flight from responsibility, both on the plane of action and on the plane of belief, that drove the ancient world into the shelters of pagan and Christian supernaturalism.

There is hardly a field of theoretical life from which these signs of intellectual panic, heralded as portents of spiritual revival, are lacking. No catalogue can do justice to the variety of doctrines in which this mood appears. For purposes of illustration we mention the recrudescence of beliefs in the original depravity of human nature; prophecies of doom for western culture, no matter who wins the war or peace, dressed up as laws of social-dynamics; the frenzied search for a center of value that transcends

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human interests; the mystical apotheosis of "the leader" and élites; contempt for all political organizations and social programs because of the obvious failure of some of them, together with the belief that good will is sufficient to settle thorny problems of economic and social reconstruction; posturing about the cultivation of spiritual purity; the refurbishing of theological and metaphysical dogmas about the infinite as necessary presuppositions of knowledge of the finite; a concern with mystery rather than with problems, and the belief that myth and mysteries are modes of knowledge; a veritable campaign to "prove" that without a belief in God and immortality, democracy—or even plain moral decency —cannot be reasonably justified.

Liberalism — not the 19th century ideology or social theology of laissez-faire which was already moribund before the First World War—but liberalism as an intellectual temper, as faith in intelligence, as a tradition of the free market in the world of ideas is everywhere on the defensive. Before the onrush of cataclysmic social and historical changes, large sections of the intellectuals and clerks of the Western world are abandoning the hard-won critical positions of the last few centuries. In the schools, the churches, and in the literary arts, the tom-tom of theology and the bagpipes of transcendental metaphysics are growing more insistent and shrill. We are told that our children cannot be properly educated unless they are inoculated with "proper" religious beliefs; that theology and metaphysics must be given a dominant place in the curriculum of our universities; that churchmen should cultivate sacred theology before applying the social gospel; that business needs an inspired church that speaks authoritatively about absolutes,—this by the editors of *Fortune;* that what is basically at stake in this war is Christian civilization despite our gallant Chinese, Moslem, and Russian allies; that the stability of the state depends on an *unquestioned* acceptance of a unifying dogma, sometimes identified with the hierarchial authoritarianism of Catholicism, sometimes with democracy; that none of the arts and no form of literature can achieve imaginative distinction without "postulating a transcendental reality." *Obscurantism is no longer apologetic; it has now become precious and wilful. Fundamentalism is no longer beyond the pale; it has donned a top hat and gone high church.*

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Philosophy and the Assault Against Scientific Method

The primary evidence of the new failure of nerve is to be found in an attitude underlying all of the views and movements enumerated, and many others as well. It exhibits itself as a loss of confidence in scientific method, and in varied quests for a "knowledge" and "truth" which, although they give us information about the world, are uniquely different from those won by the processes of scientific inquiry. Often, with no great regard for consistency, these uniquely different truths are regarded as "superior" to the common garden variety truths of science and good sense. They are the self-proclaimed governors of the moral and theoretical economy. Their function is to point to man's natural and supernatural end and to prevent science, competent to deal only with means, from stepping out of bounds.

This distrust of scientific method is often concealed by statements to the effect that science, of course, has a certain validity in its restricted sphere and that only the pretensions of scientific philosophy, naturalism, empiricism, positivism—not to speak of materialism,—are being criticized. Yet it is not to the actual procedures of scientific inquiry that such critics go to correct this or that formulation of scientific philosophy. Instead they invoke the claims of some rival method to give us knowledge of what is beyond the competence of scientific method. Occasionally they boldly assert that their substitute method gives a more reliable and completer knowledge of the matters that the sciences report on, particularly about the behavior of man and the history of society. What an eloquent revelation is contained in Reinhold Niebuhr's words: "Science which is only science cannot be scientifically accurate."*

Distrust of scientific method is transformed into open hostility whenever some privileged, "private" truth pleads for exemption from the tests set up to safeguard the intelligence from illusion. The pleas for exemption take many forms. They are rarely open and direct as in the frenzy of Kierkegaard who frankly throws overboard his intelligence in order to make those leaps of despairing belief which convert his private devils into transcendent absolutes. Usually these pleas are presented as corrolaries of special *theories* of knowledge, being, or experience. There are some who interpret science and discursive knowledge generally

**The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. I, p. 73, N. Y. 1941.

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as merely a method of confirming what we *already* know in a dim but sure way by other modes of experience. If the methods of scientific inquiry do not yield this confirmation, they are held to be at fault; some other way must be found of validating and communicating primal wisdom. Others maintain that scientific method can give us only partial truths which become less partial not by subjecting them to more careful scrutiny but by incorporating them into a theological or metaphysical system whose cardinal principles are true but not testable by any method known to science. Still others openly declare it to be axiomatic that every experience, every feeling and emotion, directly reports a truth that cannot be warranted, and does not need to be warranted, by experiment or inference.

These, bluntly put, are gateways to intellectual and moral irresponsibility. They lay down roads to a happy land where we can gratify our wishes without risking a veto by stubborn fact. But of the view that every mode of experience gives direct authentic knowledge, it would be more accurate to say that it carries us far beyond the gateways. For in effect it is a defense of obscurantism. It starts from the assumption that *every* experience gives us an authentic report of the objective world instead of material for judgment. It makes our viscera an organ of knowledge. It justifies violent prejudice in its claims that if only we feel deeply enough about anything, the feeling declares some truth about the object which provokes it. This "truth" is regarded as possessing the same legitimacy as the considered judgment that finds no evidence for the feeling and uncovers its root in a personal aberration. After all is it not the case that every heresy-hunting bigot and hallucinated fanatic is convinced that there is a truth in the feelings, visions, and passions that run riot within him? Hitler is not the only one for whom questions of evidence are incidental or impertinent where his feelings are concerned. If the voice of feeling cannot be mistaken, differences would be invitations to battle, the ravings of an insane mind could legitimately claim to be prophecies of things to come. It is not only as a defense against the marginally sane that we need the safeguards of critical scientific method. Every vested interest in social life, every inequitable privilege, every "truth" promulgated as a national, class or racial truth, likewise denies the competence of scientific inquiry to evaluate its claims.

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Those who hold this view sometimes seek to avoid its consequences by admitting that not every experience or feeling is as valid as every other, any more than every scientific judgment is as valid as every other. But this does not alter the logic of their position. The relative validity of different scientific judgments is established by methods of public verification open to all who submit themselves to its discipline, whereas the relative validity of feelings is decided by another private feeling.

Not infrequently the demand that the revelations of feeling, intuition or emotion about the world meet scientific canons of evidence is rejected as an arbitrary legislative decree concerning what visions are permissible and what may or may not exist. The complaint is made that such a demand impoverishes imaginative resources and blights the power to see new and fresh visions without which preoccupation with method is nothing but a word-game of sterile minds. As far as the seeing of visions and the winning of new truths are concerned, such an interpretation is nothing short of grotesque. The essential point, when the question of knowledge or truth arises, is whether we have seen a vision or been a victim of a delusion; or, to avoid the appearance of question-begging, whether we have beheld a trustworthy or untrustworthy vision. Some people claim to see what we know is not there. If seeing were believing, or if all seeing were evidence of what could be believed, independently of the conditions under which the seeing took place, it would be easy to keep men perpetually duped.

The intelligent demand for evidence need not paralyze the pioneers of truth who catch glimpses of what until then may be undreamed of. Nor does the progress of science demand complete and exact confirmation of an hypothesis at the very outset, but only enough to institute further inquiries. The history of the sciences is sufficient evidence that the discipline of its method, far from being a bar to the discovery of new knowledge, is a positive aid in its acquisition. What other discipline can point to the acquisition of new knowledge or to truths about existence that command the universal assent of all investigators?

Nor is it true that scientific method or the philosophy of naturalism, which whole-heartedly accepts scientific method as the only reliable way of reaching truths about man, society, and

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nature, decrees what may or may not exist. It concerns itself only with the responsibility of the assertions that proclaim the existence of anything. It does not forbid but explores and tests. It does not jeer at the mystical swoon of dumb rapture; it denies only the mystic's retrospective cognitive claim for which no evidence is offered except the fact of a trance. It does not rule out on *a priori* grounds the existence of supernatural entities and forces. The existence of God, immortality, disembodied souls or spirits, cosmic purpose or design, as these have customarily been interpreted by the great institutional religions, are denied by naturalists for the same generic reasons that they deny the existence of fairies, elves, leprechauns, and an invisible satellite revolving between the earth and moon. There is no plausible evidence to warrant belief in them or to justify a probable inference on the basis of partial evidence.

There are other conceptions of God, to be sure, and provided they are not self-contradictory, the naturalist would be unfaithful to his own philosophy if he refused to examine the evidence for their validity. All he asks is that the conception be sufficiently determinate to make possible specific inferences of the *how*, *when*, and *where* of His operation. The trouble with most conceptions of God which differ from the conventional ones is that either they are so vague that no one can tell what they mean, or else they designate something in experience for which a perfectly suitable term already exists.

Unfortunately, for all their talk of appeal to experience, direct or indirect, religious experientialists dare not appeal to any experience of sufficiently determinate character to permit of definite tests. There is a certain wisdom in this reluctance. For if experience can confirm a belief, it can also disprove it. But to most supernaturalists the latter is an inadmissable possibility. We therefore find that the kind of experience to which reference is made is not only unique but uniquely self-authenticating. Those who are not blessed by these experiences are regarded as blind or deaf and, under certain circumstances, dangerous to the community. But is it not odd that those who worship Zeus on the ground of a unique experience should deny to others the right to worship Odin on the ground of a different unique experience?

Scientific method cannot deny that the secular and religious

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spokesmen of the supernatural hear voices, but it cannot accept these voices, as they are reported, as valid testimony about the world of fact or the world of value. It judges the truth of what is heard by what it logically leads to in the realm of empirical behavior. It seeks to draw what is reported about this world or any other into some community with the limited but precious store of responsible assertions that constitute knowledge. The attack upon scientific method, in order to be free to believe whatever voice speaks to us, is a flight from responsibility. This is the dominant characteristic of the failure of nerve.

Social Crisis and Metaphysical Hunger

The causes of the failure of nerve in our time are multiple and obvious. Economic crises, world war, a bad peace, tragically inept statesmanship, the tidal waves of totalitarianism, tell the story of the twentieth century. These are the phenomena that are behind the interrupted careers, the frustrated hopes, the anxiety, the sense of being lost and alone, the growing bewilderment, fear and horror—that feed the theology of despair and the politics of wish. It is important to remember this. The "arguments" of those who have been panicked into embracing the new varieties of transcendental consolation may be met a thousand times over. But not until a democratic, freedom-and-welfare-planning economy is built out of what is left of our world, in which stable traditions can absorb the conventions of revolt of political man and the experiments of growth of individual men, will these intellectual excesses subside from epidemic to episodic proportions. Until then it is necessary to prevent intellectual hysteria from infecting those who still cling to the principles of rational experiment and analysis.

There is still another source of the new fusion of superagony and superstition. This is the inability of those liberal, labor, and socialist movements which have prided themselves on being scientific and which have lost one social campaign after another, to supply a positive philosophy, that would weld emotion and scientific intelligence, as a new rallying ground. Wilsonian idealism is dead although some do not know it, syndicalism is a fascist changeling, and orthodox Marxism is bankrupt. The grand visions of the socialist prophets have given way to petty political horse-trading and fixations on the good will of bourgeois statesmen.

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The left lives from day to day in a world going from worse to worse.

Into the breach has stepped the motley array of religionists filled with the *élan* of salvation and burdened with the theological baggage of centuries. *This is the one respect in which the new failure of nerve basically differs from the old.* The failure of nerve of the early Christian era sought to convert the soul to God in order to withdraw it from all concern with the world. Today the churches are so much of this world that their other worldliness is only a half-believed prophecy of man's inescapable destination rather than an ideal of personal and social life. As interpreters of divine purpose, they have now become concerned with social healing, with the institutions of society and with the bodies of men, as necessarily involved in the healing of individual souls. The world-order is to become a moral and religious order. Plans for the post-war world and for social reconstruction are coming from the Pope as well as from the humblest Protestant sect. They are now at flood-tide. The Churches bid well to replace political parties as sounding boards, if not instruments, of social reform.

It is characteristic of the tendencies hostile to scientific method that they reject the view that the breakdown of capitalism and the rise of totalitarianism are primarily the result of a conjunction of material factors. Rather do they allege that the bankruptcy of Western European civilization is the direct result of the bankruptcy of the scientific and naturalistic spirit. The attempt to live by science resulted in chaos, relativism, Hitlerism and war. The latter are treated as superficial evils destined to pass like all of God's trials. But the radical evil is a scientific attitude which sacrificed true understanding for prediction and individual salvation for social control.

That science was king in the social life of the Western world, that modern ills are the consequences of our attempt to live by scientific theory and practice—these assumptions border on fantasy. No convincing evidence has ever been offered for them. On the contrary, the chief causes of our maladjustments are to be found precisely in these areas of social life *in which the rationale of scientific method has not been employed.* Where is the evidence that any Western State ever attempted to meet scientifically the

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challenge of poverty, unemployment, distribution of raw materials, the impact of technology? Attempts to grapple with these problems in relation to human needs in a rational and scientific spirit have run squarely against class interests and privileges which cut savagely short any inquiry into their justification. What has controlled our response to basic social problems have been principles drawn from the outworn traditions or opportunist compromises that reflect nothing but the shifting strength of the interests behind them. In either case the procedure has had little to do with the ethics and logic of scientific method. It is only by courtesy that we can call them principles at all. Drift and improvisation have been the rule. Enthusiasm for the bare *results* of the physical sciences—which undoubtedly did reach a high pitch in the 19th century—does not betoken an acceptance of a scientific or experimental philosophy of life in which all values are tested by their causes and consequences. The cry that a set of "laboratory techniques" cannot determine values in a philosophy of life betrays the literary man's illusion that the laboratory procedures of the natural sciences are the be-all and end-all of scientific method instead of restricted applications of it in special fields.

The truth is that scientific method has until now been regarded as irrelevant in testing the values embodied in social institutions. *If* one accepted the religionists' assumption that values can be grounded only on a true religion and metaphysics, together with their views about the ideal causation of events, it could be legitimately urged against them that the bankruptcy of civilization testifies to the bankruptcy of *their* metaphysics. For if science is irrelevant to values, it cannot corrupt them; and if theology and metaphysics are their sacred guardian, they are responsible for the world we live in.

Theology in a Crisis

The social principles of Christianity have had almost two thousand years in which to order the world on a moral basis. It is not likely that anything new can be discovered from its principles or that its social gospel will succeed better in eliminating war, social distress, and intense factional strife, than it did during the historical periods in which religious institutions enjoyed chief authority. And when we examine the behavior and doctrines of different religious groups as they meet the trials of our world

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today, the impression is reinforced that there is no more unity of purpose among them, no more agreement in program and direction of effort, than among their secular brethren. But whereas the latter *may* rely upon a method by which to limit, adjudicate and negotiate the differences among them, the former *must* absolutize their differences if they are consistent.

It is an obvious fact that all religious groups, with the exception of some Protestant churches in America, have been able to find support of their own national governments in prosecuting the war compatible with the sacred principles of Christianity. Some of them have even professed to be able to derive the necessity of such support from sacred doctrine. Cardinal Verdier of France and Cardinal Hinsley of England have declared the war to be a religious crusade; so have some of the German bishops on the other side who have blessed Hitler's arms and prayed for his victory; while the Pope himself is still neutral in respect to it. M. Maritain at the time of the Nazi-Soviet Pact declared that the war against Hitler was a just war but not a religious one. He also asserted "it is entirely understandable" that the German bishops should support their government; indeed, that it was naive to be scandalized by the divisions among religious groups on the war. Today the just war has become transformed in M. Maritain's eyes into a "religious" war. Yet no matter how they characterize the war, religious groups do not contest the validity of opposite statements made about the war by other national religious groups who take their point of departure from the *same* religious premises.

Now this is extremely odd. No one would tax theologians with insincerity. But if it is true that a religious principle or dogma is compatible with two contradictory positions in respect to the defeat of Hitlerism, then the principle or dogma in question is irrelevant to the nature of the war. And since it is true that the defeat of Hitlerism is of the very first importance for the social reconstruction of Europe, we are justified in entertaining a lively suspicion of the relevance of Christian principles to such reconstruction, if at the same time they can reconcile themselves equally well to Hitler's victory or defeat.

The only implication that can be drawn from this strange state of affairs is that religious groups are seeking, as they always have, to make of God an instrument of national policy. One of

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two things: Either national policy can be defended as good or just without theological sanctions or dogmas, in which case the interposition of religion obscures issues: or the defense presupposes religious dogmas, in which case, to countenance a different national policy, is to betray *religious* dogma. The German Bishops who admonished the Catholic soldiers in a Pastoral Letter to give their lives "*in obedience to the Fuehrer*" should have been denounced as bad Catholics. Before Catholics, Protestants and Jews urge the acceptance of their dogmas as necessary preconditions for intelligent belief in democracy and anti-Hitlerism, let them convert their own churches to democracy, and denounce religious neutrality before Hitlerism for what it is, connivance with the enemy. This is their sector of the battle. But, better still, let them take their theology out of politics.

On the very question of the war itself the Protestant Churches of America are split wide open although this is somewhat concealed by the unanimity of interest in problems of post-war reconstruction. Yet no matter with what voice the Churches speak on the issues of the day, they do so not as other associations of citizens who must face demands of empirical evidence, but as guardians of a revelation which gives them unique knowledge of man and his destiny.

Religion can escape showing its credentials concerning the inspiration of its knowledge but not concerning its validity. For the reliability of any knowledge is tested in the necessities of intelligent action. That test, together with the varying counsel of the Churches on specific social policies, is sufficient to indicate that there is no unique religious knowledge or religious guidance. When Church pronouncements about the nature of the world are not irrelevant or clearly false, they can be more plausibly derived from positions that Churches usually characterize as unbelieving. When the claims to unique knowledge are exploded, the last resort of religionists is the assertion that religious beliefs, and only religious beliefs, can supply that dynamic faith without which secular defence of the good society is ineffectual, unable to implement its own humanist ideals.

Faith, Sin, and Good Sense

The defense of religious faith takes many forms. Most of them are variations on the theme that if the beliefs of faith were

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false, the world would be a terrible place: therefore they must be true. Or since the beliefs of faith are consoling, they cannot be false. Sometimes the argument rises a little higher. Because not everything can be proved, since even science must make assumptions, some faith in something is unavoidable if one is to believe or do anything. Therefore faith in the absurd is justifiable. But only our faith, not the other fellow's! On its most sophisticated level, faith is defended not as a specific belief but as an attitude of wisdom and resignation towards the human situation. When it is realized that such faith is not distinctively religious at all, either there is a relapse into metaphysical double-talk about faith also being a form of knowledge or religion is defined so that all people who have faith or passion, i.e., who are not yet dead, are regarded as religious and committed to religious beliefs. But when religious belief is a universal coefficient of all other beliefs, it is irrelevant to them. This may be seen most clearly in the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr.

Reinhold Niebuhr is one of those men of whom Emerson said they were better than their theology. A radical and honest intelligence, he brings to bear upon specific problems of social change a scientific attitude and rare courage, that make his discussions always illuminating. But not a single one of the positions that Niebuhr takes on the momentous issues of social and political life is dependent on his theology. One may accept his rather reactionary theology, which is an eloquent combination of profound disillusionment in human action and a violent belief in human ideals, and deny all his secular views. Or one may accept the latter, as so many of his friends do, and regard the former as moving rhetoric that breathes passionate conviction about something whose very sense is in doubt. Indeed, if we look closely at Niebuhr's theology, and take it out of the language of myth and paradox, we find that whatever is acceptable in it to critical thought is an obscure retelling of what was known to the wiser unbelievers of the past.

Consider, for example, Niebuhr's conception of religion. It is "the primary and ultimate act of faith by which life is endowed with meaning. Without that act of faith life cannot be lived at all."* To be alive is to be religious, and the atheists, the irreligious, the

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agnostics, have been converted by definition: they all have religion. This is innocent enough so long as we never lose sight of the differences between religions or *what* men believe in, and so long as we realize that although life cannot be lived without some acts of faith, death may be the consequence of other acts of faith, e.g., faith that pneumonia can be cured by absent treatment. What Niebuhr must now show as a theologian is that the faith necessary for life is necessarily faith in God. This he completely fails to do. Instead by another essay in redefinition—one not so innocent—he equates the meaning which is the object or reference of *any* faith, with God. "There is no action without religious orientation and no religion without God."* To be alive is not only to be religious, it is to have faith in God even if we deny his existence. This is still not the end. Niebuhr must now as a *Christian* theologian show that the God we affirm in action is the God of revealed Christianity who is transcendent to the world and yet intimately connected with it. This is accomplished in his Gifford Lectures by describing man as a "self-transcendent spirit" consumed by a metaphysical anxiety and hunger which can only be appeased by belief in the symbolical (not literal!) truth of the Incarnation. Insofar as arguments are employed instead of exhortation they are fallacious. For example: what is unique about the human spirit cannot be derived from man's animal nature; nor is it an expression of reason. Therefore, infers Niebuhr, man is a child of God who can only comprehend himself "by a principle of comprehension which is beyond his comprehension." One mystery calls to another and the plain fact that what is distinctive about human traits has its origin and fruit in the social and cultural matrix, is not so much as considered.

Man, Niebuhr asserts, is not only a creature of God, he is a sinner. He is an inevitable sinner and yet cannot escape responsibility for his sins. He is a sinner because he forgets that he is a creature of God, because he thinks he is more than he is, knows more than he does, because, in short, he is not God. When he is contritely aware of his sinfulness, of its inevitability and his responsibility for it, grace descends upon his soul and he receives remission from sin.

* "Religion and Action," *Religion in the Modern World,* University of Pennsylvania Bicentennial Conference (1941) p. 91.

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There is a simple moral homily that can be tortured out of this oxymoronic language but it is completely spoiled by Niebuhr's theology.

What Niebuhr is telling us is that every effort, every movement of man in warding off evil or achieving good, leads him to "the sin of imperialism in action." Whether we are selfish or righteous, the tincture of sin is present. For we absolutize the relative, dogmatize insight, eternalize the fleeting, take the part for the whole. Man deludes himself into believing that he sees the infinite from a finite perspective, and that he transcends self-interest and selfishness in his conceptions of impartial justice. All of his ideals, including his God, he makes in his own image. In his struggle to achieve his limited ideals, as if they were absolute, he consequently is guilty of fanaticism whose evils may be not less than those he set out to rectify. Man must therefore accept some supernatural standard to curb the conflicts of partial truths, each claiming to be the whole truth.

What is here correctly perceived as a problem still remains a problem, for Niebuhr's solution is stultifying. The conflict of absolutes is to be settled by appeal to another absolute which on Niebuhr's own theology is necessarily injected with human finitude! This is a romantic and violent solution of a human predicament already violently distorted to begin with. Niebuhr writes as if all men were naturally romantic theologians, victims of a fantastic logic according to which, if God did not exist, *they* must be God. He ignores the entire tradition of scientific and naturalistic philosophy that has never claimed divinity for man nor infallibility for his judgment. The doctrine of original sin turns out to be nothing more than the discovery that man is a limited creature. But this is no more justification for believing he is essentially evil than that he is essentially good. For these are qualities that depend upon the use man makes of his limitations. Naturalist philosophers have urged men to understand the causes of their limitations, so that by reducing the margins of ignorance and increasing their scientific knowledge, they may be less limited. The whole enterprise of scientific method with its self-corrective procedures cuts under the dogmatism, absolutism and fanaticism of Niebuhr's theological man at the same time as it gives us conclusions that are sufficiently reliable to overcome some specific limitations. Niebuhr would frighten men out of their mistaken

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belief in omnipotence by a fairy tale about a creature that is absolutely omnipotent. The humility it induces is one of fear, not the humility which is fostered by knowledge of human limitations and ignorance. His wisdom does not carry further than the caution that no claim is completely justified, but he is helpless before the problem of determining the degree and extent of its justification, so necessary in order to get on with the problems in hand. Whenever Niebuhr tackles these problems, he deserts his theology.

It is true that intellectual pride is an expression of "original sin" insofar as we make a claim to know what we do not know and overlook the natural and historical origins of reason. Niebuhr is very eloquent about the dangers of intellectual pride. "Fanaticism is always a partly conscious, partly unconscious attempt to hide the fact of ignorance and to obscure the problem of skepticism." And again: "The real fact is that all the pretensions of final knowledge and ultimate truth are partly prompted by the uneasy feeling that the truth is not final and also by an uneasy conscience which realizes that the interests of the ego are compounded with this truth."* True, but Niebuhr should address these words not to naturalists but to theologians, for in the history of thought it has been the naturalists who have exposed the pretensions of final truths and who have uncovered the nerve of interest behind the absolute values of church, state, and conscience. Science has known its dogmatism, too. But the cure of bad science is better science, not theology.

On many specific issues of scientific inquiry Niebuhr is one with us. Despite his extravagant rhetoric, he does not believe in blowing out the candle-light of intelligence and wallowing in the dark night of the soul in an effort to make mysteries more mysterious. The only point at which Niebuhr seems to use his theology is in situations where values and partial interests are locked in mortal combat.

But does an appeal to the absolute really help us here? Is any war so fanatical and bestial as a religious war in which the conditioned values of social and personal interests take on the awful authority of unconditioned claims? Is might right when it is divine might? Is not the God of faith always the God of limited, erring and partial men? If we must have an absolute,

*_The Nature and Destiny of Man_, p. 196.

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let us look for it elsewhere. Against Niebuhr's myth of a private and mysterious absolute, we counterpose the public and self-critical absolute of scientific method. By evaluating claims in the light of their causes and consequences, it makes clear the interests from which they spring, and the meaning of what they propose. By guiding us to the construction of a social order whose institutions provide for the negotiation and compromise of claims on the basis of the completest knowledge available, it promises not absolute security but greater security. It does not pretend to make men gods but to treat more intelligently the problem always at hand. It is not incompatible with action, even with revolutionary action on a large scale. Nothing is won forever but something is always won. How to get men to accept this absolute method—and to test it by its fruits, not only in the realm of nature but of human affairs—is a specific problem of scientific politics and education concerning which theology can tell us nothing.*

The Tail Sting of Eternity

Niebuhr's theology has a grand irrelevance to the specific patterns and problems of social life, although psychologically it breathes a defeatism more congenial to Toryism than to his own political progressivism. The same cannot be said of other varieties of theological doctrine which are tied up with a Church as Niebuhr's is not and which take the historical content of revelation more literally than he does. This is most evident in the social and political implications of Roman Catholicism.

Political events bearing on the prospects of its survival have made it necessary for the Catholic Church to strike a new tune in democratic countries. Its leading spokesmen are seizing every occasion to assure us that the last and best defence of democracy and freedom is a Christian social order. By "freedom," they explain, is meant "freedom in its true Christian sense," and by "Christian," they are careful not to explain, is always meant "Catholic." Any catalogue of Church activities in these countries will reveal that it is increasing in power and influence. It is in the van of attack against the best liberal traditions of American culture and education, particularly in the field of education.*

*For a more extended critique of Niebuhr, cf. my *Social Change and Original Sin*, New Leader, Nov. 11, 1941.

*For a detailed examination see *The Bertrand Russell Case*, edited by John Dewey and H. M. Kallen, N. Y. (1941) 227 pp. This almost completely unreviewed book contains articles, in addition to those of the editors, by Morris R. Cohen, Walton Hamilton, Emory Guy Shipler, Richard McKeon, Carleton Washburne and others.

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What is not understood so well is the fact that its official *doctrinal* teachings, although compatible with a "hierarchial, authoritarian democracy," are incompatible with the specific freedoms in the Bill of Rights, including religious toleration, which are essential to the democracy we know. Christian morality is Catholic morality and the Christian state is bound before God and man to carry out the precepts of morality as interpreted by the Church, which insists that the salvation of the soul is its chief concern, and that outside of the Church there is no salvation. Insofar as it is weak and its communicants in a minority, the Church tolerates modern freedoms and liberties. Where it is strong enough, it suppresses them, particularly the propagation of "false" religious teachings by other groups that may undermine "true" Catholic belief.

That these are not recondite inferences of a suspicious critic of church history is shockingly evident in the Papal Encyclical, *Libertas*, of Leo XIII. That American churchmen are faithful to this doctrine is just as clear. Fathers Ryan and Boland in their authoritative *Catholic Principles of Politics* explicity say that if professing Catholics constituted a majority of the population in the United States, the state they would set up "could not permit non-Catholic sects to carry on general propaganda nor accord their organizations certain privileges that had formerly been extended to all religious corporations, for example, exemption from taxation." (p. 200)*

*It is interesting to note that taxation was one of the means used by the Soviet State to wipe out Russian churches. The curious reasoning by which Msgr. Ryan justifies this position is detailed in another book:

"As we have already pointed out, the men who defend the principle of toleration for all varietities of religious opinion, assume either that all religions are equally true or that the true cannot be distinguished from the false. On no other ground is it logically possible to accept the theory of indiscriminate and universal toleration (*sic!*).

"To the objection that the foregoing argument can be turned against Catholics by a non-Catholic State, there are two replies. First, if such a State should prohibit Catholic worship or preaching on the plea that it was wrong and injurious to the community, the assumption would be false; therefore the two cases are not parallel. Second, a Protestant State could not logically take such an attitude (although many of them did so in former centuries) because no Protestant sect claims to be infallible. Besides, the Protestant principle of private judgment logically implies that Catholics may be right in their religious convictions, and that they have a right to hold and preach them without molestation.

"Such in its ultimate rigor and complete implications is the Catholic position concerning the alliance that should exist between the Church and a Catholic State."
Ryan and Miller *The State and Church*, Macmillan 1937, pp.36-37

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This doctrine testifies not to a failure of nerve but just to plain nerve—brazen and provocative. To match it we must go to the literature of the Communist Party which, demanding unabridged civil rights for itself under existing society, tells us that under the proletarian dictatorship, "all the capitalist parties—Republican, Democratic, Progressive, Socialist, etc.—will be liquidated, the Communist Party functioning alone as the Party of the toiling masses."**

As the self-constituted shepherd of all men's souls, the Catholic Church demands as great a control over social and political life as any totalitarian party, for as Pope Leo XIII made abundantly clear, it alone can determine what is subject to the power and judgment of the Church as affecting the salvation of the human soul. Consequently, when the Catholic Bishops who constitute the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference list the chief evils that imperil supernatural religion in this country as "false doctrine, immorality, disbelief, and reborn paganism," it is not hard to see what they refer to. False doctrine is Protestantism, or any religious faith except the true one; immorality is civil marriage, divorce, birth control, any civil freedom that violates a sacrament; disbelief is modern philosophy, any heresy that contradicts the heresies canonized as *philosophia perennis;* reborn paganism is any morality which is not grounded on revelation and any political theory that advocates the separation of church and state. There is a sting of death to the free spirit in every measure the Church proposes to take to safeguard its dogmas.

Partly as a result of Catholic agitation and partly as an expression of spiritual despair, many influential Protestant groups have echoed the call for a society organized on Christian foundations. It is questionable whether all who employ the phrase know what they mean by a Christian society. But whatever it means, it must refer either to Christian organization or Christian dogma. Would a Christian society based on Protestant dogmas, assuming the Protestant sects could agree on any, lead to a state similar in anti-democratic outline to Catholic clericalism? This is not so clear but the evidence of history and the logic of the position make it likely. At most, it would tolerate different religious beliefs but

**William Z. Foster, *Toward Soviet America*, p. 275 (1932).

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not *the freedom of disbelief*. The state could no longer be regarded as neutral to religion. Education would have to be purged of all freethinkers to prevent them from examining the "truths" of religion as critically as the truths of other branches of knowledge. This conclusion is implicit in the recent writing of Professor Hocking. The new orthodoxy would find new ways to implement its sway over the minds and allegiances of citizens. Whatever methods it employed would require the contraction, if not the proscription, of the scientific temper in order to diminish the hazards of belief. The social usefulness of ideas to those who possessed power, and their comfort and consolation to those who did not, would become the criteria of accepted truth. The Protestant Reformation would have succumbed to the Counter-Reformation whose secular form already prevails in totalitarian Europe.

Democracy and the Hebraic-Christian Tradition

These new currents of Protestantism which profess sincere acceptance of present day democracy employ arguments whose force is drawn from a key assumption. It asserts that modern democracy has been derived from, and can only be justified by, the theological dogmas of Hebraic-Christianity according to which all men are created by God and equal before Him. This assumption is the common ground of unity of all religious and metaphysical rationalizations of democracy. It is the rallying point of the much publicized Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, whose pronouncements indicate that it has officially accepted Maritain's Catholic conception of a pluralistic, hierarchially organied culture, crowned by religion, as "the cornerstone on which human civilization must be erected in our day." Scientific inquiry has a place in it: it will meet the "need for men to attain that increased measure of knowledge, which, according to Francis Bacon, brings men back to God." This Hebraic-Christian philosophy of democracy and culture is presented to a world in which a false conception of scientific knowledge has made it "peculiarly resistant to the teachings of religion. . . ."*

It can be briefly demonstrated that the derivation of modern democracy from the dogma that all men are created by God and

*All quotations from the official statement of the Third Annual Conference, New York Times, September 1, 1942.

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equal before Him is (1) logically invalid (2) historically false and (3) irrelevant to the pressing problem of democratic defense and reconstruction.

(1) From the alleged fact that all men are equal before God, it does not at all follow logically that they are, or should be, equal before the state or enjoy equal rights in the community. This must be justified by other considerations. Even on the theological scheme, although God is equally the creator of angels, men, animals and things, they are not all equal in value before him. Men are also equal before death, pain, disease and the tax-collector. But how they should be treated often depends upon their relative state of health, their efforts, the consequences of their efforts, and other *differential* features of their behavior. Some Christians have held—with as much logic as their brethren who drew contrary conclusions—that because all men are equally sinners in the sight of the Lord, their social and political inequalities in this transitory life are unimportant. Not infrequently, pious Christians have believed that these inequalities are our punishment for the sins of our fathers. If men have a common origin, biological or theological, that in itself is not logically sufficient for asserting that they must or should have common opportunities or common education or common citizenship. If we believe that they should have, as we do, then we believe it on grounds whose validity would be unaffected whether they had a common origin or not.

Nor is the alleged fact that man was created by God a logical ground for honoring him. We are told both by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury and the American Institute of Judaism that the dignity of man lies not in himself but in that he is a child of God. In the course of a typical Catholic denunciation of "atheistic saboteurs" who would keep the idea of God separate from our government, Professor Manion of Notre Dame, at a public meeting sponsored by the Conference, proclaims: "The only reason why we have to respect this so-called dignity of man is because it is God-created."* The logic would be just as bad even if the rhetoric were better. As well say that the only reason we have for not lying is that it is forbidden by God. Or that the only reason for appreciating the beauty of a landscape is that it is

*Proceedings of Third Conference, p. 538.

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God's handiwork. The origin of a thing may have a bearing upon its nature. But the value of a thing cannot be inferred from its origin. It is not putative original nature but what emerges in the course of developing nature which is relevant to normative judgment. To judge people not by their origins, for which they are not responsible, but by their efforts, fruits, and achievements is a sound democratic maxim.*

(2) There is little warrant for the view that the theological dogmas of Hebraic-Christianity are the historical source of modern democracy. Judaism contenanced slavery while Christianity never condemned it in principle. The Church was one of the mainstays of feudalism; until its real-estate holdings were raided by absolute monarchs, it furnished the chief theoretical justification of the divine right of kings. Ideologically, modern democratic theory owes more to Stoic philosophy and Roman law than to Christian Dogma.

Religious institutions based on supernatural dogmas tend towards theocracy. Priesthoods have often been hereditary, and when not tightly closed corporations, rarely subject to democratic influences. It has sometimes been urged as a mitigating feature of the hierarchical, authoritarian structure of the Church that "a peasant might become a Pope." True, but so can an Austrian housepainter or the son of a Georgian cobbler become a Dictator. Does that alter the character of totalitarianism?

(3) We are asked to accept religious dogmas as true mainly on the grounds of their effectiveness in combatting Hitlerism. This in turn rests, as we have seen, upon the notion that Fascism is the consequence not of economic conditions, nationalist tradition, and disastrous political policies inside Germany and out, but of the spread of positivism, secularism, and humanism. Why Fascism should then have arisen in such strongly religious and metaphysical countries as Italy and Germany and not in such scandalously heretical and positivistic countries as England and America, is something that the neo-Thomists and their fellow-travellers do not explain.

None of the specific proposals of social reform that issue from religious conclaves, or even the principles sometimes offered

*For a more detailed refutation of the attempts to ground democracy upon theological and metaphysical foundations, cf. "The Philosophical Presuppositions of Democracy," *Ethics*, April, 1942, pp. 275-296.

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to justify them, follow from the theological dogmas that preface their announcement. This is no more surprising than the absence of connection between the pleas for divine guidance which since the war stud the speeches of *all* statesmen of belligerent countries, except those of Stalin,* and the content of the speeches. Specific proposals to insure peace, security and freedom warrant attentive consideration no matter from what quarter they come. But their value in effecting what they claim to accomplish depends not on pious faith and good will but upon their consequences which can be adequately explored only by rigorous scientific thought without benefit of theology. To the extent that the scope of scientific thinking is restricted or limited to judgments of bare fact, the new social consciousness of the Christian churches will have just as little relevance to the future as their old consolatory ideals to the past. At best it will take flight from power politics; at worst it will act as a cover for it.

* * * *

The new failure of nerve in contemporary culture is compounded of unwarranted hopes and unfounded beliefs. It is a desperate quest for a quick and all-inclusive faith that will save us from the trouble of thinking about difficult problems. These hopes, beliefs and faiths pretend to a knowledge which is not knowledge and to a superior insight not responsible to the checks of intelligence. The more fervently they are held the more complete will be their failure. Out of them will grow a disillusion in the possibility of intelligent human effort so profound that even if Hitler is defeated, the blight of Hitlerism may rot the culture of his enemies.

*For Stalin the dialectic takes the place of Providence. And since June 22nd, 1941, the Soviet radio has discovered that Nazism is a movement which seeks to destroy Christianity.

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Anti-Naturalism in Extremis

John Dewey

PHILOSOPHICAL NATURALISM has a more distinguished ancestry than is usually recognized; there are, for example, the names of Aristotle and Spinoza. However, the Aristotle who has exercised the greatest influence upon modern philosophy was one whose naturalism did not prevent him from regarding the physical as the lowest stratum in the hierarchical order of Being and from holding that pure intellect, "pure" because free from contamination by any trace of matter, is at the apex. It is to be doubted, however, whether the work of Aristotle would have inured, as it has done, to the credit of anti-naturalism if he had not been adopted as the official philosopher of the Church, and if his writings had not found their way into modern culture through the transformation undergone in the medieval period.

For in this period, the out-and-out supernaturalism of the Roman Catholic Church was injected whenever possible into interpretation of Aristotle. The naturalistic elements in his teaching were overlaid, covered up, with supernatural beliefs; or, if that was not possible, were slurred over as the views of a pagan not enlightened by the Hebraic-Christian revelation from on high. The supernaturalism thus read into Aristotle united with elements in him which are genuinely non-naturalistic from the standpoint of present science. It resulted in his being held up by many modern writers as the founder, in conjunction with Plato, of spiritualistic anti-naturalistic philosophy.

However, when it is a question of moral theory, the naturalism of Aristotle lies so clearly on the face of what he said that medieval Christian theological philosophy was compelled to give it a radically different turn. How different was this turn may be inferred from words of Cardinal Newman which express the orthodox view: "The pattern man, the just, the upright, the generous, the honorable, the conscientious, if he is all this not from a supernatural power, but from *mere natural virtue* has the

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prospect of heaven closed and refused him."* When such measure is meted out to such virtues as honor, uprightness, justice, and generosity, one readily gathers how conduct proceeding from appetite and desire will be judged. For the latter are even more deeply dyed with the Pauline and Augustinian view of the total corruption of the body and the carnal lusts of flesh. The historic source of the doctrine of the corruption of nature and the fallen estate of man may be relegated to the background. But the western world was reared under the influence of the doctrines and sacraments of the Church. Contrast between the old Adam which is "natural" and a higher self which is "spiritual" remained the assumption of philosophers who avowedly repudiated supernaturalism — as in the striking case of Kant. The Church never forgot to remind its adherents of the lost condition that was due to their fallen estate. For otherwise there would have been no need for the work of redemption supernaturally entrusted to it. Similarly, the professedly non-supernatural philosopher who was anti-naturalist never ceased to dwell upon the merely sensuous and self-seeking character of the natural man and upon the morally seductive character of natural impulse and desire. For otherwise there would be no place for the doctrine that the truly moral factors in human relations are superimposed by a spiritual non-natural source and authority.

It is needful to use such terms as non-naturalist and anti-naturalist. For in addition to frank supernaturalism, there are philosophers who claim to rest their extra—if not super—naturalism upon a higher faculty of Reason or Intuition, or whatever, not upon special divine revelation. While I am personally convinced that their philosophy can be understood only as an historical heritage from frank supernaturalism, I shall not urge that view. I wish rather to call attention to a point of agreement and practical co-operation between the members of the two anti-naturalistic schools. Both of them identify naturalism with "materialism." They then employ the identification to charge naturalists with reduction of all distinctive human values, moral, esthetic, logical, to blind mechanical conjunctions of material entities—a reduction which is in effect their complete destruction. This identification thus permits anti-naturalists to substitute name-calling for a discussion

*The word *mere* plays a large role in anti-naturalistic writings.

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of specific issues in their proper terms in connection with concrete evidence.

Regarding the identification in question, it suffices here to note that the naturalist is one who of necessity has respect for the conclusions of natural science. Hence he is quite aware that "matter" has in modern science none of the low, base, inert properties assigned to it in classic Greek and medieval philosophy:—properties that were the ground for setting it in stark opposition to all that is higher, and to which eulogistic adjectives may be applied. In consequence he is aware that since "matter" and "materialism" acquired their significance in contrast with something called "spirit" and "spiritualism," the fact that naturalism has no place for the latter deprives the former base epithets of philosophic significance. It would be difficult to find a greater distance between any two terms than that which separates "matter" in the Greek-medieval tradition and the technical signification, suitably expressed only in mathematical symbols, the word bears in science today.

Reference to science reminds us that nobody save perhaps the most dogmatic supernaturalist will deny that modern methods of experimental observation have wrought a profound transformation in the subject matters of astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology, or that the change wrought in them has exercised the deepest influence upon human relations. The naturalist adds to recognition of this fact, a further fact of fateful significance. He sees how anti-naturalism has operated to prevent the application of scientific methods in the whole field of human and social subject matter. It has thereby prevented science from completing its career and fulfilling its constructive potentialities, since it has held the human is extra-natural and hence reserved for organs and methods which are radically different from those that have given man the command he now possesses in all affairs, issues, and questions acknowledged to be natural. It is beyond human imagination to estimate the extent to which undesirable features of the present human situation are connected with the split, the division, confusion and conflict that is embodied in this half-way, mixed, unintegrated situation in respect to knowledge and attainment of truth. Democracy cannot obtain either adequate recognition of its own meaning or coherent practical realization as long as

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anti-naturalism operates to delay and frustrate the use of methods by which alone understanding of, and consequent ability to guide, social relationships can be attained.

In this connection, it is appropriate to say something which is more or less apart from the main topic of this paper. Philosophic naturalism still has a work to do in a field that so far it has hardly done more than touch. Because of the influence of supernatural religion, first Catholic and then Protestant, it is not just "matter" which continues to reflect the beliefs of a pre-scientific and pre-democratic period. Such words as mind, subject, self, person, *the* individual, to say nothing of "value," are more than tinged in their current usage—which affects willy-nilly philosophical formulations—with significations they absorbed from beliefs of an extra-natural character. There is almost no word employed in psychological and societal analysis and description that does not reflect this influence.

Hence comes the conclusion that the most pressing problem and the most urgent task of naturalism at the present time is to work out, on the basis of available evidence, a naturalistic interpretation of the things and events designated by the words that now exert almost complete control of psychological and societal inquiry and report. For example, no issue is more basic for naturalistic theory than the nature of observation. A survey of contemporary literature will, nevertheless, disclose that it is rarely discussed in its own terms:—that is of procedures employed by inquirers in astronomical observatories; in chemical, physical and biological laboratories; in the examinations conducted by physicians, and in what is done in field excursions of botanists and zoologists. Instead, it appears to be obligatory to substitute for observation of observation its reduction to terms of sensations, sensa, sense-data (the exact word is of little import), which are affected by an inheritance of non-naturalism.

The current discussion of language—also a topic of basic importance—affords another example. Students of this subject, from a logical and a social point of view, who regard themselves as anti-metaphysical scientific positivists, write as if words consisted of an "inner," private, mentalistic core or substance and an "outer" physical shell by means of which a subjective intrinsically incommunicable somewhat gets conveyed "trans-subjec-

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tively"! And they appear quite unaware of the extra-natural origin and status of their postulate. Until naturalists have applied their principles and methods to formulation of such topics as mind, consciousness, self, etc., they will be at a serious disadvantage. For writers of the "rational" philosophical variety of anti-naturalism almost always draw their premises from alleged facts of and about mind, consciousness, etc. They suppose the "facts" are accepted by naturalists. When they do not find the conclusions *they* draw, they accuse naturalists of holding an inconsistent and truncated position.

II

Since this topic is too large for discussion here, the rest of this paper is occupied with the contrast existing between charges brought against naturalism (because of its alleged identity with "materialism") and the facts of the case. At the present time there is a veritable eruption of such accusations. Many of them seem to regard the present tragic situation of the world as a heaven-sent occasion for accusing naturalism of responsibility for the manifold evils from which we are suffering. I begin with citing some specimen cases.

"Determinists, materialists, agnostics, behaviorists and their ilk can be sincere defenders of democracy only by being inconsistent; for their theories, whether they wish it or not, lead inevitably to justifying government by brute force and to denying all those rights and freedoms which we term inalienable." Naturalists are not included by name in the foregoing list. But a miscellaneous roll of writers that follows shows they fall within the "ilk" in question: "Kant and Carlyle, William James and Herbert Spencer, William McDougall and Henri Bergson, Gobineau and Chamberlain—all of them would be horrified at the complete product of Naziism—made such a philosophy as that of government by brute force not only possible but almost inevitable by their denial of one or more of the fundamentals on which any free and humanitarian and Christian concept of society must be built."*

The grouping together of men whose philosophies have nothing, or next to nothing, in common beyond denial or neglect of

*Thomas P. Neill, in *The Catholic World*, May 1942, p. 151.

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the dogmas of that Roman Catholic theological philosophy, which is held up by the adherents of this faith as the sole basis of a "free" and ordered society, is a commentary on the intellectual criteria employed by the writer. It is kind of gross carelessness that a naturalist would not dare to engage in. Only the confidence of one who thinks he is speaking for a divinely founded and divinely directed institution could lump together men of such contrary beliefs. Even more to the point is the fact that among those who are regarded as causes of the present social disorder is Kant—one who is a philosophical anti-naturalist, and who among other things formulated the doctrine that every human person is an end in himself, possessed of freedom because of membership in a realm above the natural world: — the Kant who regarded it as the function of history and the gradual improvement of social institutions to usher in republican government as the only one that conformed to the philosophical principles he laid down.

In view of the fact that Bergson is included in the list, it is interesting that the next quotation is from a writer, held up to Protestants as a specimen of the liberalism of the Catholic Church, who has publicly expressed peculiar indebtedness to this very Bergson: "What the world and civilization have needed in modern times is the intellectual order, what the temporal good of man has needed for four centuries, is Christian philosophy. In their place arose a separate philosophy and an inhuman humanism, a humanism destructive of man because it wanted to be centered upon man and not upon God. We have drained the cup; we now see before our eyes that bloody anti-humanism, that ferocious irrationalism and trend to slavery in which rationalist humanism finally winds up."*

A "mere" naturalist would hesitate, even if he counted upon the ignorance or short memory of his audience, to assume that the world was in a state of blissful order and peace, free from blood and ferocity, before the rise of rationalism, naturalism and humanism. Even the ordinary reader might recall that some of the bloodiest and most cruel wars in human history were waged in the name of and with the explicit sanction of supernaturalism

*From J. Maritain's *Contemporary Renewals in Modern Thought*, p. 14, contained in *Religion in the Modern World.*

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and of the ecclesiastic institution which dominated European culture until the last "four centuries," so significantly mentioned.

If, however, the reader is familiar with the articles of supernatural medieval philosophy, he will also recall that bloody and ferocious persecutions and oppressions are very different when carried on in the interests of the Church. For in this latter case they are intended to save from eternal damnation the souls of believers in heresies; or if that is not possible at least to protect others from being contaminated by literally "damnable" heresies. The interpretation put by St. Thomas Aquinas (now the official philosopher of *the* Church) upon the Biblical injunction "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is proof for the orthodox that since the love in question is love of an immortal soul which can be saved only by acceptance of the creed of the Church and by sharing in its sacraments, that injunction of Jesus is far from having the meaning that would naturally be assigned to it. For it is an express authorization of any and all means that will tend to save that soul from the tortures of hell. For what are peace, earthly and natural contentment, and a reasonable degree of happiness for a mere three score years and ten in comparison with supernatural eternity? Hence, the proper course to be taken by genuine "love"!

I come now to a statement which, if I mistake not, has both supernatural and philosophical anti-naturalists among its sponsors. "Men who hold to this naturalistic view in democratic countries are unaware of the dangers in their position. Influenced by the last remnants of philosophical idealism, romantic transcendentalism, or religious theism in our day, they act as if they believed in the spiritual conception which they have intellectually repudiated. They try to maintain their feeling for the dignity of man, while paying homage to an essentially materialistic philosophy according to which man is simply (sic!) a highly developed animal. They are living off the spiritual capital which has come down to them from their classical and religious heritage. . . . Since this contradiction will prove to be intellectually intolerable, scholars and teachers *must* (!) recover and re--affirm the spiritual conception of man and his good which we have derived from Greek and Hebraic-Christian sources. If they fail to do this not only religious reverence and moral responsibility, but also the scholarly activities with which they are directly concerned, will be greatly

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endangered. Already under totalitarian regimes and to a lesser extent in the democracies, these activities are being undermined."*

It is probable that the signers of this statement belong to both the supernatural and the rationalistic varieties of anti-naturalism. Reference to our classic *and* religious heritage, to Greek *and* Hebraic-Christian sources, indicates that such is the case. They agree for purposes of attack. But cross-examination would disclose a fundamental incompatibility. For example, philosophical anti-naturalists are obliged to confine themselves to dire prediction of terrible things to happen because of naturalism. Their companions of the supernatural variety are aware, however, of active and forcible means that were once employed to stay the spread of heresies like naturalism so as to prevent the frightful consequences from happening. If they are literate in their faith, they know that such methods are still required, but are prevented from now being put into execution by the spread of naturalistic liberalism in civilized countries. When members of this group think of the pains that were taken when the Church had the power to protect the faithful from "science falsely socalled," and from dangerous thoughts in scholarship, they might well smile at the innocence of their colleagues who imply that inquiry, scholarship, and teaching are completely unhampered where naturalism has not obtained a foothold. And they might certainly say of their merely philosophical confreres, that *they* are living off a capital derived from a supernatural heritage. A mere naturalist will content himself with wondering whether ignorance of history, or complacency or provincialism with respect to the non-christian part of the world, or sheer rhetorical dogmatism is the outstanding trait of the pronounciamento. A historian of ideas would be able to contribute some interesting information as to the beliefs of the persons who have done the most to make democracy and freedom of mind a reality in the modern world, and as to the beliefs of the persons who withstood their efforts at every turn until the march of events forced them to desist from that particular line of obscurantic obstructionism.

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*From a statement signed by a group of Princeton professors, published in Vol. II of the *Proceedings of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion.* Although "science" appears in the title, the meetings and discussions of this Conference have been chiefly devoted to asserting some aspect of anti-naturalism; literary writers, being innocent of the philosophical issues involved, serving as cement of the amalgam.

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I conclude these citations with a passage written somewhat before the crisis had reached its present intensity. In a book G. K. Chesterton wrote after a visit to this country, he spoke as follows of the prospects of democracy in this country. "As far as that democracy becomes or remains Catholic and Christian, that democracy will remain democratic. . . . Men will more and more realize that there is no meaning in democracy if there is no meaning in anything; and that there is no meaning in anything if the universe has not a centre of significance and an authority that is the basis of our rights."

I should not have supposed that advance was to have been expected in greater realization of the truism that if there is no meaning in anything, there is no meaning in democracy. The nub of the passage clearly resides in assertion that the rights and freedom which constitute democracy have no validity or significance save as they are referable to some centre and authority entirely outside nature and outside men's connections with one another in society. This intrinsically sceptical, even cynical and pessimistic, view of human nature is at the bottom of all the asseverations that naturalism is destructive of the values associated with democracy, including belief in the dignity of man and the worth of human life. This disparaging view (to put it mildly) is the basis upon which rests the whole enterprise of condemning naturalism, no matter in what fine philosophical language the condemnation is set forth. The fact of the case is that naturalism finds the values in question, the worth and dignity of men and women, founded in human nature itself, in the connections, actual and potential, of human beings with one another in their natural social relationships. Not only that, but it is ready at any time to maintain the thesis that a foundation within man and nature is a much sounder one than is one alleged to exist outside the constitution of man and nature.

I do not suppose it is a matter of just expediency or policy in winning adherents that keeps in the dim background the historic origin of the view that human nature is inherently too depraved to be trusted. But it is well to recall that its source is the Pauline (and Augustinian) interpretation of an ancient Hebrew legend about Adam and Eve in the Paradise of Eden. Adherents of the Christian faith who have been influenced by geology, history, anthropology, and literary criticism prefer, quite under-

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standably, to relegate the story to the field of symbolism. But the view that all nature was somehow thoroughly corrupted and that mankind is collectively and individually in a fallen estate, is the only ground upon which there can be urged the necessity of redemption by extra-natural means. And the diluted philosophic version of historic supernaturalism which goes by the name of rationalistic metaphysical spiritualism or idealism has no basis upon which to erect its "higher" non-natural organs and faculties, and the supernatural truths they are said to reveal, without a corresponding thoroughly pessimistic view of human nature.

III

I now come to the question of the moral and social consequences that flow from the base and degrading view of nature in general and of human nature in particular that inheres in every variety of anti-naturalistic philosophy. I begin with the fact that the whole tendency of this view has been to put a heavy discount upon resources that are potentially available for betterment of human life. In the case of any candid clear-eyed person, it is enough to ask one simple question: What is the inevitable effect of holding that anything remotely approaching a basic and serious amelioration of the human estate must be based upon means and methods that lie outside the natural and social world, while human capacities are so low that reliance upon them only makes things worse? Science cannot help; industry and commerce cannot help; political and jural arrangements cannot help; ordinary human affections, sympathies and friendships cannot help. Place these natural resources under the terrible handicap put upon them by every mode of anti-naturalism, and what is the outcome? Not that these things have not accomplished anything in fact, but that their operation has always been weakened and hampered in just the degree in which supernaturalism has prevailed.

Take the case of science as a case of "natural" knowledge obtained by "natural" means and methods; together with the fact that after all, from the extra-naturalistic point of view, science is *mere* natural knowledge which must be put in stark opposition to a higher realm of truths accessible to extra-natural organs. Does any one believe that where this climate of opinion prevails, scientific method and the conclusions reached by its use can do

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what they are capable of? Denial of reasonable freedom and attendant responsibility to any group produces conditions which can then be cited as reasons why such group cannot be entrusted with freedom or given responsibility. Similarly, the low estimate put upon science, the idea that because it is occupied with the natural world, it is incapacitated from exercising influence upon values to which the adjectives "ideal" and "higher," (or any adjectives of eulogistic connotation) can be applied, restricts its influence. *The fruit of anti-naturalism is then made the ground of attack upon naturalism.*

If I stated that this low opinion of science in its natural state tended to lower the intellectual standards of anti-naturalists, to dull their sense of the importance of evidence, to blunt their sensitivity to the need of accuracy of statement, to encourage emotional rhetoric at the expense of analysis and discrimination, I might seem to be following too closely the model set by the aspersions (such as have been quoted) of anti-naturalists. It may be said, however, that while some writers of the anti-naturalistic school say a good deal, following Aristotle, about the "intellectual virtues," I fail to find any evidence that they have a perception of the way in which the rise of scientific methods has enlarged the range and sharpened the edge of these virtues. How could they, when it is a necessary part of their scheme to depreciate scientific method, in behalf of higher methods and organs of attaining extra-natural truths said to be of infinitely greater import?

Aside from displaying systematic disrespect for scientific method, supernaturalists deny the findings of science when the latter conflict with a dogma of their creed. The story of the conflict of theology and science is the result. It is played down at the present time. But, as already indicated, it throws a flood of light on the charge, brought in the manifesto previously quoted, that it is the naturalists who are endangering free scholarship. Philosophic anti-naturalists are ambiguous in their treatment of certain scientific issues. For example, competent scientific workers in the biological field are agreed in acceptance of some form of genetic development of all species of plants and animals, mankind included. This conclusion puts man definitely and squarely within the natural world. What, it may be asked, is the attitude of non-theological anti-naturalists toward this conclusion? Do those, for example, who sign a statement saying that naturalists regard man

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as "simply a highly developed animal" mean to deny the scientific biological conclusion? Do they wish to hold that philosophical naturalism and not scientific inquiry originated and upholds the doctrine of development? Or, do they wish to take advantage of the word "animal" to present naturalistic philosophers in a bad light?

Since the latter accept without discount and qualification facts that are authenticated by careful and thorough inquiry, they recognize in their full force observed facts that disclose the differences existing between man and other animals, as well as the strands of continuity that are discovered in scientific investigation. The idea that there is anything in naturalism that prevents acknowledgment of differential traits in their full significance, or that compels their "reduction" to traits characteristic of worms, clams, cats, or monkeys has no foundation. Lack of foundation is probably the reason why anti-naturalist critics find it advisable to represent naturalism as simply a variety of materialism. For the view attributed to naturalism is simply another instance of a too common procedure in philosophical controversy: Namely, representation of the position of an opponent in the terms it would have *if* the critic held it; that is, the meaning it has not in its own terms but after translation into the terms of an opposed theory. Upon the whole, the non-supernatural anti-naturalists are in such a dilemma that we should extend sympathetic pity to them. If they presented the naturalistic position in its own terms, they would have to take serious account of scientific method and its conclusions.

But if they should do that, they would inevitably be imbued with some of the ideas of the very philosophy they are attacking. Under these circumstances, the ambivalence of their own attitude is readily understood.

Lack of respect for scientific method, which after all is but systematic, extensive and carefully controlled use of alert and unprejudiced observation and experimentation in collecting, arranging and testing facts to serve as evidence, is attended by a tendency toward finalism and dogmatism. Non-theological anti-naturalists would probably deny that their views are marked by that quality of fanaticism which has marked the supernatural brand. And they have not displayed it in anything like the same intensity. But from the standpoint of logic, it must be said that

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their failure to do so is more creditable to their hearts than to their heads. For it is an essential part of their doctrine that above the inquiring, patient, ever-learning and tentative method of science there exists some organ of faculty which reveals ultimate and immutable truths, and that apart from the truths thus obtained there is no sure foundation for morals and for a humane order of society. As one critic of naturalism remarked (somewhat naively indeed), without these absolute and final truths, there would be in morals only the kind of certainty that exists in physics and chemistry.

Non-theological anti-naturalists write and speak as if there were complete agreement on the part of all absolutists as to standards, rules, and ideals with respect to the specific content of ultimate truths. Supernaturalists know better. They are aware of the conflict that exists; they are aware that conflict between truths claiming ultimate and complete authority is the most fundamental kind of discord that can exist. Hence, their claim to supernatural guidance; and hence fanaticism in carrying on a campaign to wipe out heresies which are dangerous in the degree they claim to rest on possession of ultimate truths. The non-supernatural variety in the more humane attitude it usually takes is living upon a capital which is inherited from the modern liberal developments professedly repudiated. Were its adherents to yield to the demands of logic, they would see how much more secure is the position of those who hold that given a body of ultimate and immutable truths, without which there is only moral and social confusion and conflict, a special institution is demanded which will make known and enforce these truths.

During periods in which social customs were static, and isolation of groups from one another was the rule, it was comparatively easy for men to live in complacent assurance as to the finality of their own practices and beliefs. That time has gone. The problem of attaining mutual understanding and a reasonable degree of amicable cooperation among different peoples, races, classes, is bound up with the problem of reaching by peaceful and democratic means some workable adjustment of the values, standards, and ends which are now in a state of conflict. Dependence upon the absolutist and totalitarian element involved in every form of anti-naturalism adds to the difficulty of this already extremely difficult undertaking.

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To represent naturalistic morals as if they involved denial of the existence and the legitimacy of any sort of regulative end and standard is but another case of translation of a position into the terms of the position of its opponents. The idea that unless standards and rules are eternal and immutable they are not rules and criteria at all is childish. If there is anything confirmed by observation it is that human beings naturally cherish certain things and relationships, they naturally institute values. Having desires and having to guide themselves by aims and purposes, no other course is possible. It is also an abundantly confirmed fact of observation that standards and ends grew up and obtained their effectiveness over human behavior in all sorts of relatively accidental ways. Many of them reflect conditions of geographical isolation, social segregation, and absence of scientific methods. These conditions no longer obtaining, it requires a good deal of pessimism to assume that vastly improved knowledge of nature, human nature included, cannot be employed or will not be employed to render human relationships more humane, just and liberal. The notion that such knowledge and such application, the things for which naturalism stands, will increase misunderstanding and conflict is an extraordinary "reversed charge" of results produced by dogmatic absolutism in appeal to extra-natural authority.

Reference to the pessimism which is involved reminds one of the chorus of voices now proclaiming that naturalism is committed to a dangerously romantic, optimistic, utopian view of human nature. This claim might be looked at as a welcome variation of the charge that naturalism looks upon everything human as "merely" animal. But it happens also to be aside from the mark. It is probably "natural" for those who engage in sweeping rationalistic generalizations to match their own pessimism by attributing an equally unrestrained optimism to their opponents. But since naturalists are committed to basing conclusions upon evidence, they give equal weight to observed facts that point in the direction of both non-social behavior and that of amity and cooperation. In neither case, however, are facts now existing taken to be final and fixed. They are treated as indications of things to be done.

Naturalism is certainly hopeful enough to reject the view expressed by Cardinal Newman when he said "She (the Church) regards this world and all that is in it, as dust and ashes, compared with the value of a single soul. . . .She considers the action of

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this world and the action of the soul simply incommensurate." Naturalism rejects this view because the "soul and its action" as supernatural are put in opposition to a natural world and its action, the latter being regarded as thoroughly corrupt. But naturalism does not fly to the opposite extreme. It holds to the possibility of discovering by natural means the conditions in human nature and in the environment which work in detail toward the production of concrete forms of both social health and social disease—as the possibility of knowledge and corresponding control in action by adequate knowledge is in process of actual demonstration in the case of medicine. The chief difficulty in the road is that in social and moral matters we are twenty-five hundred years behind the discovery of Hippocrates as to the natural quality of the cause of disease and health. We are also behind his dictum that all events are equally sacred and equally natural.

I mention one further instance of the contrast between the relative bearings of anti-naturalism and naturalism in connection with social problems. Because of the influence of a low view of human nature and of matter a sharp line has been drawn and become generally current between what is called *economic* and what is called *moral*:—and this in spite of facts which demonstrate that at present industry and commerce have more influence upon the actual relation of human groups to one another than any other single factor. The "economic" was marked off as a separate compartment because on the one hand it was supposed to spring from and to satisfy appetites and desires that are bodily and carnal, and on the other hand economic activities have to do with mere "matter."

Whether or not Karl Marx originated the idea that economic factors are the only ultimate causative factors in production of social changes, he did not originate the notion that such factors are "materialistic." He accepted that notion from the current and classic Greek-medieval-Christian tradition. I know of no way to judge how much of the remediable harshness and brutal inhumanity of existing social relationships is connected with denial of intrinsic moral significance to the activities by means of which men live. I do not mean that anti-naturalism is the original source of the evils that exist. But I do mean that the belief that whatever is natural is sub-normal and in tendency is anti-moral, has a great deal to do with perpetuating this state of affairs after we have

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natural means at command for rendering the situation more humane. Moreover, on the political side we fail to note that so-called laissez-faire individualism, with its extreme separatism and isolation of human beings from one another, is in fact a secularized version of the doctrine of a supernatural soul which has intrinsic connection only with God.

Fear and hate for that which is feared accompany situations of great stress and strain. The philosophic attempt to hold the rise of naturalism accountable for the evils of the present situation, as the ideological incarnation of the enemy democratic peoples are fighting, is greatly accentuated by the emotional perturbations that attend the present crisis. Intense emotion is an all-or-none event. It sees things in terms of only blackest black and purest shining white. Hence, persons of scholastic cultivation can write as if brutality, cruelty, and savage intolerance were unknown until the rise of naturalism. A *diabolus ex machina* is the natural emotionalized dramatic counterpart of the *deus ex machina* of supernaturalism. A naturalistic writer being human may yield to the influence of fear and hate. But in so far he abandons his humanistic naturalism. For it calls for observation of concrete natural causal conditions, and for projection of aims and methods that are consonant with the social conditions disclosed in inquiry. His philosophy commits him to continued use of all the methods of intelligent operation that are available. It commits him to aversion to the escapism and humanistic defeatism inherent in anti-naturalism.

As the war is a global war, so the peace must be a peace that has respect for all the peoples and "races" of the world. I mentioned earlier the provincialism which regards the non-Christians of the world, especially of Asia (and later Africa will come into the scene) as outside the fold, and which philosophical non-supernaturalism admits within the truly human compass only upon conditions its own metaphysics dictates. A philosophic naturalist cannot approve nor go along with those whose beliefs and whose actions, if the latter cohere with their theories, weaken dependence upon the natural agencies, cultural, scientific, economic, political, by which a more humane and friendly world must be built. On the contrary, to him the present tragic scene is a challenge to employ courageously, patiently, persistently and with wholehearted devotion all the *natural* resources that are now potentially at our command.

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Malicious Philosophies of Science

Ernest Nagel

THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE for the widely held view that changes in the content and standards of theoretical inquiry are uniquely determined by changes in the economic and political structure of society. To be sure, scientific inquiries are often initiated and subsidized by those concerned with problems of commerce and technology, and the manner in which scientific discoveries are assimiliated by a society depends on its economic and political organization. But once a department of inquiry establishes its traditions of workmanship, so the history of science seems to indicate, the course of subsequent developments in it is determined by the materials explored, by the talents and skills available, and by the logic of theoretical investigation.

In almost every age, however, the attitudes which men assume toward personal and social issues have been often justified by them in terms of their understanding of the methods and latest findings of science. Professional scientists have frequently used their specialized knowledge to buttress or criticize the institutions of their day; but publicists, religious leaders, and philosophers have usually played a more prominent role in this task of evaluating the general social import of scientific methods and scientific theories. Such evaluations do not, in most cases, flow from the specific character of scientific methods or their technical achievements; they issue from the social and religious commitments of those who make them, and are symptomatic of the stresses and strains in the social scene.

In the midst of actual and impending disaster, men are inclined to listen to any voice speaking with sufficient authority; and during periods of social crisis, when rational methods of inquiry supply no immediate solutions for pressing problems, spokesmen for institutional and philosophic theologies find a ready audience for a systematic disparagement of the achievements of empirical science. Ideas which the advance of knowledge had

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partially driven underground during periods of fair social weather, are then insolently proclaimed as panaceas for public and private ills. And the assured methods of scientific control and understanding, because they effect no wholesale resolution of problems and because they yield no conclusions beyond the possibility of error and correction, are then declared to be unsuitable guides for rational living.

The mounting economic and political tensions of our own age have not failed to produce a literature of this type. From various quarters—from men of science, historians of ideas, as well as outspoken representatives of theological systems—there has come a flood of criticism of modern science and of the secular naturalism which has accompanied its growth. The criticism has been neither uniform nor consistent. But the common objective of much of it has been the limitation of the authority of science, and the institution of methods other than those of controlled experimentation for discovering the natures and values of things. Many recent evaluations of science have thus had an obviously malicious intent; and the present essay will seek to determine briefly to what extent, in the case of several influential types of philosophies of science, good sense has been sacrificed to such malice.

I

Undoubtedly the most solidly intrenched intellectual basis for the current disparagement of science is a well-known but nonetheless questionable theory of knowledge upon which experimental method is made to rest. This type of critique starts with the familiar fact that in many theories of the natural sciences, especially physics, the various sensory qualities (such as colors and sounds) receive no *explicit* mention, and that it is only the quantifiable traits of things (such as mass and length) which are noticed. The immediate conclusion which is then drawn is that sensory qualities are not properties of objects in their own right, but are dependent on the activity of an *immaterial mind*. The remainder of the argument may then proceed along either of two lines of interpretation. According to one of them, more common in earlier centuries than in our own, the traits studied by the natural sciences are the only genuinely real things, while the directly experienced qualities are only a passing appearance. The sights and

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sounds and smells of the human scene are thus taken to have only a "subjective" existence and to be the otiose by-products of the true executive order of nature. According to the second interpretation, currently highly fashionable, the qualities apprehended in daily experience are the concrete and exclusive reality. It is these qualities which are held to constitute the intrinsic natures of things; and since these qualities are allegedly psychic products, it is they which are regarded as the intelligible substance of the world. In putting to one side the qualitative character of existence the natural sciences are consequently preoccupied with shadowy abstractions, which have at best only a mean practical value; and the laws which are the outcome of scientific inquiry, far from expressing the true nature of things, fail to grasp and convey the dynamic reality of existence.

On either interpretation, therefore, the world is split into two discontinuous realms. One of them, the proper domain of natural science, is a "mysterious universe" forever foreign and essentially unintelligible to the common experience of mankind; the other, the locus of enjoyments and values, is the theater of the mind's activities and creations, and is the only reality in which mind can feel confidently at home. On either alternative, the human scene is endowed with character so distinctive that the procedures of the empirical sciences can provide no guide to it. For the controlled methods of experimentation are held to be relevant only to the realm of abstract quantity, so that the entire field of valuation, of deliberation and moral choice, is exempted from the norms of experimental inquiry. Qualitative reality, which by hypothesis has an inherent connection with mind and consciousness, must therefore be explored by techniques different from those employed in the positive sciences; and in this realm, claims to truth must be subjected to canons of a radically different kind. Imagination, intuition, introspection, and modes of emotional experience, are some of the ways which have been recommended for grasping genuine reality and for understanding human affairs.[1]

[1]Two citations from recent writers will help convey the flavor of the alternative methods which have been proposed.

"Imagination is more adequate to reality than reason, for reality is not rational; therefore poetry and religion are better adapted to the real than the sciences. The real is not abstract and general. It is always concrete and individual; that is the reason why imagination alone can grasp it, whereas the intellect cannot fully conceive

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Nevertheless, the actual character of scientific method offers warrant neither for such attempts to limit its authority, nor for the radical dualism of the qualitative and the quantitative, the mental and the physical, upon which those attempts thrive. A brief mention of some obvious features of experimental procedure will be sufficient to show how inadequate are the analyses on whose basis the authority of scientific method is impugned.

In the first place, however "abstract" scientific theories may be, those theories can be neither understood nor used except in contexts of familiar qualitative discriminations. These contexts are tacitly taken for granted in the explicit formulation of theories, and are neither ignored nor contemned by the practicing scientist. Consider, for example, some of the operations involved in even so elementary a process as the measurement of spatial magnitude: standards of magnitude must be constructed, requiring the use of familiar bodies of daily experience; the relative constancy of the standards must be established, thus necessitating the noting of qualitative changes such as temperature; and the mutual relations of bodies must be discriminated, thus involving the identification and distinction of bodies on the basis of such qualities as color and the texture of surfaces. In general, no metaphysical opposition between the qualitative and the quantitative is forced upon us in this process, since the institution of quantitative standards is simply the ordering and the discrimination of qualitative continua. The view that the subject-matter and the data of the physcist are opaque pointer-readings is clearly a falsification of the scientist's procedure—a falsification which becomes more evident the more thorough is our examination of the full spectrum of scientific operations.

In the second place, there can be no doubt that the colors, sounds, and other characteristics we perceive in our every-day

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it. A theory of imagination . . . is urgently needed as a foundation for ethics, esthetics, philosophy of history and of religion, and even for metaphysics." (Richard Kroner, in a paper read before the Third Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, as quoted by *The New York Times*, August 29, 1942.)

". . . It is an axiom of sound method that any experience is, in some manner and to some degree, *intrinsically* cognitive. An experience of love . . . is at the same time an insight into the loveable nature of what is loved; an experience of moral urgency . . . is an insight into the rightness of the action to be performed; an experience of reverence . . . is an insight into the divinity of what is reverenced. Every such experience is a growth in wisdom and the wisdom is not testable by scientific techniques. . . ." (Philip Wheelwright, "Religion and Social Grammar," *The Kenyon Review*, vol. 4 (1942), pp. 203-204).

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affairs owe their existence not only to the objects they are commonly believed to qualify, but also to complicated mechanisms (including physiological ones) of which common-sense is frequently unaware. But it does not follow that these qualities are therefore constituted out of some "mental stuff," or that a "mind" (in the sense of a disembodied, experimentally unidentifiable agent) is required for bringing them into existence. Whatever the conditions may be for the occurrence of colors, for example, experience shows extended *surfaces* to be colored; and if it is held that colors are "mental," traits (such as that of being extended) must be attributed to the mind which are the presumptive distinguishing marks of physical objects. In that case, however, what becomes of the notion of mind as a disembodied entity? But dialectic aside, there is no shred of evidence that in addition to complicated physico-organic processes any other "agents" are required to produce the qualitative manifolds of experience. The postulation of an additional agent (held to be something distinctively "mental") is on par with the caprice of endowing the planets with souls in order to account for their motions. The actual procedures of the natural sciences thus offer no ground for the alleged dualism between the mental and the physical; and accordingly, even the semblance of a reason disappears for limiting the scope of experimental techniques.

And in the third place, the "abstractness" with which natural science is charged as a fatal weakness, is in fact a trait of all cognition. All cognition involves the making of distinctions and the recognition of some things as relevant and others as not; in this sense, therefore, all cognition abstracts from its subject-matter and prescinds those features from it which bear on the problems at issue. To *know* the course of the planets is not to engage in periodic journeys around the sun; to *know* the factors and conditions of a human transaction is not the same as to participate in its joys and sorrows. More generally, it is not the function of knowledge to reproduce its own subject-matter; and to refuse to make abstractions of any sort is to abandon knowledge in favor of uninformed feeling and blind experience. Accordingly, just what is the quarrel of those critics who find fault with the abstractness of science? Do they seriously claim that the theories of science are not relevant to their subject-matters? Do they main-

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tain that there are ways essentially different from and superior to those employed in the natural sciences for ascertaining the conditions for the occurrence of things and events? Or do they disdain science simply because it does not supply what no knowledge worthy of the name can offer—an unanalyzed reduplication of its own subject-matter? In either event, their discontent flows from a wilful romanticism and a disregard of the historical achievements of the natural sciences; it provides no valid ground for excluding the operations of experimental inquiry from the domain of human affairs.

II

A second widespread critique of scientific methods is at bottom a variant of the one already considered. It does not *explicitly* disown the authority of science in human affairs; but it does recommend the adoption of such vague and irresponsible canons of experimental control that it in effect argues for the exclusion of the logical methods employed in the positive sciences from the study of social problems. This view rests its case on two major claims; that in the past the natural sciences have mistakenly tried to "reduce" all features of the world to "mechanical" or "materialistic" properties; and that recent advances in our knowledge have demonstrated the breakdown of the "mechanical" categories of classical science. The present view, like the previous one, maintains that the human scene is so discontinuous with the "lower levels" of nature that a common logic of inquiry cannot be adequate to all of them; it therefore concludes that problems affecting human destiny must be investigated on the basis of canons of validity and intelligibility which differ radically from those used in the natural sciences.

Let us examine these contentions. And first, what are we to understand by the terms "mechanical" and "materialistic"? When practicing physicists characterize an explanation as "mechanical," they mean a theory which, like the one developed by Galileo and Newton, explains a class of changes *entirely* on the basis of the masses and the spatial and temporal relations of bodies. In this quite precise sense of the word, Maxwell's electro-magnetic theory is not a mechanical theory, and with its advent in the 19th century

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the earlier hope that the science of mechanics would become the universal science of nature was gradually abandoned. But those who accuse classical science of being "mechanical" are anything but so definite as to the real point of their charge. For according to them the Darwinian theory of organic evolution as well as Maxwell's theory of electro-magnetism are mechanical, although neither of these theories satisfies the physicist's definition of "mechanical." The only clear meaning which can be given to the accusation is that classical science is *deterministic*—in the sense that it attempts to discover the precise conditions for the occurrence of phenomena, without benefit of final causes and without invoking experimentally unidentifiable causal agents.

But if this is the meaning of the charge, the claim that modern science no longer operates with mechanical categories is singularly ill-founded. As already noted, even classical physics recognized that mechanical theories (in the technical sense of the word) are not universally adequate; and recent researches into atomic phenomena have only fortified this conclusion. There is, however, nothing in modern research which requires the abandonment of the *generic* ideal of classical science: to find the determining conditions for the occurrence of phenomena, expressible in terms capable of overt empirical control. Thus, even modern quantum-theory—although it employs technical modes of specifying the character of physical systems which are different from those used in classical mechanics—is deterministic or mechanical (in the loose sense) in so far as it rigorously specifies the unique physical conditions under which certain types of changes will occur. Similarly, modern genetics is no less deterministic than the Darwinian theory, since the former even more completely than the latter has succeeded in disclosing the mechanisms or structures involved in the transmission of characteristics from one generation to another. It is therefore simply not true that recent advances in knowledge have demonstrated the untenability of the logical canons of classical science.

The claim that the world-picture according to natural science "reduces" everything to blind, undifferentiated collocations of material particles, and thus fails to do justice to the distinctive traits of human behavior, likewise rests on a misconception as to

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what the sciences in fact accomplish. Consider, for example, the following comments of the late Lord Balfour:

> What are we to say about a universe reduced without remainder to collections of electric charges radiating throughout a hypothetical ether? . . . We can certainly act on our environment, and as certainly our actions can never be adequately explained in terms of entities which neither think, nor feel, nor purpose, nor know. It constitutes a spiritual invasion of the physical world:—it is a miracle. . . . We are spiritual beings, and must take account of spiritual values. The story of man is something more than a mere continuation of the story of matter. It is different in kind. . . .[2]

That this represents a caricature of what the achievements of physics imply, will be evident if we recall that the sciences seek to determine the precise *conditions* under which events come into being and continue to exist. For in ascertaining those conditions the sciences do not *thereby deny* the existence of any traits found in nature, whether in the human scene or elsewhere. In particular, physics has assumed the task of finding the most general and pervasive constituents and circumstances of existing things; it does not legislate away as unreal or non-existent—and could not do so without contradiction—the things and events into whose conditions of existence it inquires. The explanations which physics offers for the traits and changes it studies, consist of careful specifications of the conditions under which those traits and changes occur; and no other sense of "explanation" is relevant in discussing its findings. Whether these explanations can be stated entirely in terms of a special class of entities and their relations (for example, in terms of the distribution of electrically charged particles), is a specific empirical issue which can be resolved only by detailed empirical inquiry; it cannot be settled by dialectic, or by an *apriori* fiat such as that the living cannot be explained in terms of non-living.

Criticisms of natural science such as the following are therefore altogether pointless, since they operate with mythological conceptions as to the character of its explanations:

> With the faintest and simplest element of consciousness, natural science meets something for which it has no pigeonhole anywhere in its system. . . .Mind at its best is autonomous. Granting that it is connected mysteriously and intimately with

[2]Arthur J. Balfour, in an essay contributed to *Science, Religion and Reality* (edited by Joseph Needham), pp. 15-17.

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> physical processes that natural science claims as its own, it cannot be reduced to those processes, nor can it be explained by the laws of those processes.[8]

Explanations of "mind" in terms of physical processes do not wipe out the distinction between the behavior of inorganic masses and the distinctive activities of men; nor do they pretend to deduce somehow the direction of those activities from physical laws containing no mention of purposive behavior. Such explanations simply state the generalized conditions for the occurrence of "mind." Accordingly, the only form of "reduction" with which the natural sciences may rightly be charged, is the form which consists in ascertaining the structures under which specific traits are manifested; and it is clear that if those sciences failed in effecting such a reduction, they would fail in achieving the objective of knowledge. The conclusion seems unavoidable that those who would exclude the logical methods of the natural sciences from fields of social inquiry, on the score that these methods commit their users to the "reductive fallacy," are in effect recommending the abandonment of the quest for the causal determinants of human affairs.

One final claim, associated with the charge that the logic of natural science is "reductive," remains to be considered — the claim that human traits are "emergent properties" on a "higher level" of existence than are those with which physics and chemistry are concerned, so that the methods employed by these disciplines cannot be adequate to the study of the higher emergent qualities. Some examples will make clear the chief features of the theory of emergence. However much we may know about the interaction of hydrogen and oxygen with *other* elements, so it is said, it is impossible to infer from such knowledge the fact that they combine to form water; and in particular, the qualities which emerge when water is formed could never be predicted from those data. Similarly, no amount of knowledge concerning the physics and physiology of the human body makes it possible to deduce the "spiritual" characteristics of the organism as a thinking, purposive creature. Nature is thus conceived as a system of levels of emergence, each level requiring a peculiar mode of study; and *a fortiori,* the distinctive qualities of human beings can be satis-

[8] Brand Blanshard, "Fact, Value, and Science," in *Science and Man* (edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen), pp. 189, 203.

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factorily explored and understood only when inquiry into them is conducted on the basis of a logic specific to "spiritual" subject-matter.

But the following brief remarks will be sufficient to blunt whatever force the argument from the alleged facts of emergence may be supposed to have. It is indeed not possible to *deduce* the properties of water (for example, its transparency or its ability to quench thirst) from those of hydrogen and oxygen, *if* the former properties do not enter into the premisses from which the deduction is attempted. For in general, no statement containing the term "P" can be deduced from a class of statements unless the latter also contain that term. In one sense, therefore, the main contention of emergent evolution is simply a logical truism. In the second place, although the occurrence of certain traits may be left unexplained by one theory, a different theory (perhaps a revised form of the first one) may supply a satisfactory explanation. For example, the theories of physics which were accepted at the beginning of the 19th century were unable to account for any chemical facts, although present-day physics is in the position to explain the occurrence of many chemical reactions. Accordingly, whether a quality is to be regarded as an "emergent" or not is relative to a specific theory, and is not an *inherent* fact about that quality. It also follows that since no theory of science can be regarded as necessarily final, traits which at one time are taken to fall into the province of one specialized discipline, may at some later date be explained on the basis of theories developed in a different branch of science. This has certainly been the history of such sciences as chemistry, biology, and even psychology, in their relation to physics. And finally, if the doctrine of emergence is seen in this light, no clear reasons remain why the logic of experimental inquiry—as conducted in the natural sciences—has no authority over investigations into human affairs. Indeed, as the natural sciences have become more comprehensive they have provided an enriched understanding of human traits. No theoretical limits can be set to such a progressively widening scope of the sciences of nature. And what is no less to the point, these fresh achievements have involved no surrender, on the part of the natural sciences, of the procedural principles under whose guidance they obtained their historical successes.

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III

The views which have been noticed thus far attempt to limit the scope of scientific methods on the basis of considerations that are at least nominally scientific in character. The criticisms of science to which attention must next be directed do not even pretend to adduce scientific grounds for their claims, and are frankly based upon explicit theological and metaphysical commitments for which no experimental evidence is invoked. The chief burden of their complaints is that science offers no "ultimate explanations" for the facts of existence; and their chief recommendation is the cultivation of "ontological wisdom" as the sole method for making "ultimately intelligible" both the order of the cosmos and the nature of the good life.

Some citations from recent writers will exhibit more clearly than would a paraphrase the unique mixture of pontifical dogmatism, oracular wisdom, and condescending obscurantism which seems to be the indispensible intellectual apparatus of this school of criticism. Professor Gilson characterizes the plight of science as follows:

> This world of ours is a world of change; physics, chemistry, biology, can teach us the laws according to which change actually happens to it; what these sciences cannot teach us is why this world, taken together with its laws, its order, and its intelligibility is, or exists. . . . Scientists never ask themselves *why* things happen, but *how* they happen. Now as soon as you substitute the positivist's notion of relation for the metaphysical notion of cause, you at once lose all right to wonder *why* things are, and why they are what they are. . . . Why anything at all is, or exists, science knows not, precisely because it cannot even ask the question. To this supreme question the only answer is that each and every particular existential energy, and each and every particular existing thing, depends for its existence upon a pure Act of existence. In order to be the ultimate answer to all existential problems, this supreme cause has to be absolute existence. Being absolute, such a cause is self-sufficient; if it creates, its creative act must be free. Since it creates not only being but order, it must be something which at least eminently contains the only principle of order known to us in experience, namely, thought.[4]

[4]Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, pp. 72, 140. Although Whitehead's manner of arriving at his speculative cosmology is radically different from that cultivated by neo-Thomists, his evaluations of the limitations of natural science are frequently not dissimilar. He comments as follows on "the grand doctrine of Nature as a self-sufficient, meaningless complex of facts": "Newton left for empirical investigation the determination of the particular stresses now existing. In this determination he

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And Professor Maritain, building on the alleged subordination of science to metaphysics, indicates some of the immediate consequences of this hierarchial arrangement:

> Science . . . is distinguished from wisdom in this, that science aims at the detail of some special field of knowing and deals with the secondary, proximate or apparent causes, while wisdom aims at some universal knowing and deals with prime and deepest causes, with the highest sources of being. . . . Wisdom is not only distinct from but also superior to science, in the sense that its object is more universal and more deeply immersed in the mystery of things, and in the sense that the function of defending the first principles of knowledge and of discovering the fundamental structure and organization thereof belongs to wisdom, not to science. . . . Science puts means in man's hands, and teaches men how to apply these means for the happiest outcome, not for him who acts, but for the work to be done. Wisdom deals with ends in man's heart, and teaches man how to use means and apply science for the real goodness and happiness of him who acts, of the person himself. . . . Science is like art in this that though both are good in themselves man can put them to bad uses and bad purposes: while in so far as man uses wisdom . . . he can only use it for good purposes.
>
> The paleontologist does not step out of his sphere when he establishes the hypothesis of evolution and applies it to the origin of the human being. But the philosopher must warn him that he is out of his field when he tries to deny for that reason that the human soul is a spiritual soul which cannot emanate from matter, so that if once upon a time the human organism was produced by a mutation of an animal organism, it was because of the infusion of a soul created by God.[5]

Although criticism of a position is futile when those who hold it make a virtue of its mysteries and when they regard themselves as superior to the usual canons of scientific intelligibility, those who are not so fortunately placed may find the following

made a magnificient beginning by isolating the stresses indicated by his law of gravitation. But he left no hint, *why in the nature of things there should be any stresses at all.* The arbitrary motion of the bodies were thus explained by the arbitrary stresses between material bodies, conjoined with their spatiality, their mass, and their initial states of motion. By introducing stresses—in particular the law of gravitation—instead of the welter of detailed transformations of motion, he greatly increased the systematic aspect of nature. But he left all the factors of the system—more particularly, mass and stress—in the position of detached facts *devoid of reason* for their compresence. He thus illuminated a great philosophic truth, that a dead nature can give no reasons. All the ultimate reasons are in terms of aim at value. A dead nature aims at nothing." A. N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought,* pp. 183-4, italics not in the text.

[5]The first paragraph is taken from the essay "Science and Wisdom," contained in *Science and Man,* pp. 66-7, 72, 94. The second paragraph is from the essay "Science, Philosophy and Faith," contained in the volume *Science, Philosophy and Religion,* the proceedings of the First Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, p. 181.

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observations not irrelevant. In the first place, there is a perfectly clear sense in which science does supply answers as to "why" things happen and are what they are. Thus, if we ask why the moon becomes eclipsed at certain times, the answer is that at those times the moon moves into the earth's shadow; if we ask why the moon behaves in this way, the answer is given in part by the theory of gravitation; if we ask why bodies behave in the manner predicated by this theory, the answer is supplied by the general theory of relativity. On the other hand, if we repeat this question concerning relativity theory, no further answer is at present forthcoming, so that for the present at least this theory is an "ultimate" or "brute" fact. Furthermore, if some day relativity theory should become absorbed into a unified field-theory embracing both macroscopic and microscopic phenomena, the unified field-theory would explain why the equations of relativity theory hold, but at the same time it would become the (perhaps only temporary) "ultimate" structural fact. In science the answer to the question "why" is therefore always a theory, from which the specific fact at issue may be deduced when suitable initial conditions are introduced. The point of these familiar remarks is that no matter how far the question "why" is pressed—and it may be pressed indefinitely —it must terminate in a theory which is itself not logically demonstrable. For no theory which explains why things happen as they do and not otherwise can be a logically necessary truth. It follows that those who seek to discern the laws of nature to be necessary, as well as those who "hope to see that it is necessary that there should be an order of nature," are violating an elementary canon of discoursive thought.

In the second place, it is obvious that anyone who invokes an "absolute cause" (or God) to explain "why" the world exists, merely postpones settling his accounts with the logic of his question: for the Being who has been postulated as the Creator of the world is simply one more being into the reasons of whose existence it is possible to inquire. If those who invoke such a Being declare that such questions about His existence are not legitimate, they surmount a difficulty only by dogmatically cutting-short a discussion when the intellectual current runs against them. If, on the other hand, the question is answered with the assertion that God is his own cause, the question is resolved only by falling back

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upon another mystery; and at best, such a "reason" is simply an unclear statement of the grounds upon which scientists regard as unintelligible the *initial* "why" as to the world's existence. But a mystery is no answer if the question to which it is a reply has a definite meaning; and in the end, nothing is gained in the way of intellectual illumination when the discussion terminates in such a manner.

In the third place, the postulation of an "absolute cause" or an "ultimate reason" for the world and its structure provides no answer to any *specific* question which may be asked concerning any particular objects or events in the world. On the contrary, no matter what the world were like, no matter what the course of events might be, the same Ultimate Cause is offered as an "explanation." This is admitted in so many words by Professor Gilson:

> The existence or non-existence of God . . . is a proposition whose negation or affirmation determines no change whatever in the structure of our scientific explanation of the world and is wholly independent of the contents of science as such. Supposing, for instance, there be design in the world, the existence of God cannot be posited as a *scientific* explanation for the presence of design in the world; it is a *metaphysical* one.[6]

But just what does an "explanation" explain when it explains nothing in particular? What understanding of our world does a metaphysics provide which is compatible both with a design in the processes of nature as well as with its absence, with the existence of specific goods as well as with their non-existence, with one pervasive pattern of causal interactions as well as with another? There is a high price in unintelligibility which must be paid when the canons of scientific discourse and inquiry are abandoned.

And finally, the assumption that there is a superior and more direct way of grasping the secrets of the universe than the painfully slow road of science has been so repeatedly shown to be a romantic illusion, that only those who are unable to profit from the history of the human intellect can seriously maintain it. Certainly, whatever enlightenment we possess about ourselves and the world has been achieved only after the illusion of a "metaphysical wisdom" superior to "mere science" had been abandoned. The methods of science do not guarantee that its conclusions are final and incorrigible by further inquiry; but it is

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

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by dropping the pretense of a spurious finality and recognizing the fallibility of its self-corrective procedures that science has won its victories. It may be a comfort to some to learn that in so far as man uses "wisdom" he can aim only at the good; since the most diverse kinds of action—kindly as well as brutal, beneficent as well as costly in human life—are undertaken in the name of wisdom, such a testimonial will doubtless enable everyone engaged in such an undertaking to redouble his zeal without counting the costs. But it is not wisdom but a mark of immaturity to recommend that we simply examine our hearts if we wish to discover the good life; for it is just because men rely so completely and unreflectively on their intuitive insights and passionate impulses that needless sufferings and conflicts occur among them. The point is clear: claims as to what is required by wisdom need to be adjudicated if such claims are to be warranted; and accordingly, objective methods must be instituted, on the basis of which the conditions, the consequences, and the mutual compatibility of different course of action may be established. But if such methods are introduced, we leave the miasmal swamps of supra-scientific wisdom, and are brought back again to the firm soil of scientific knowledge.

IV

The final variety of current criticism of science to be considered rests its case on the alleged facts of history. The development of science, it is admitted, has brought with it an increase in material power, a broadening of the average span of human life, and a wider distribution of innumerable goods than was possible in earlier days. Nevertheless, so the criticism runs, human happiness has not increased and the quality of life has not improved. On the contrary, increased power over material nature has generating a deadening monotony and uniformity in men's lives, has produced ghastly brutalities, cataclysmic wars, and fierce superstitions, and has undermined personal and social security. Science deals with instrumentalities and is incapable of determining values; and with the spread of secular naturalism and the consequent decline of religious influences, men have grown insensitive to the distinction between good and evil, and have identified material success with ethical excellence. Intellectual historians join

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hands with preachers and publicists in placing the blame for contemporary Fascism upon the demoralizing effects of positivistic philosophy. And in language solemn and threatening Professor Maritain warns his readers of the dreadful consequences which allegedly flow from scientific naturalism:

> Let us not delude ourselves; an education in which the sciences of phenomena and the corresponding techniques take precedence over philosophical and theological knowledge is already, potentially, a Fascist education; an education in which biology, hygiene and eugenics provide the supreme criteria of morality is already, potentially, a Fascist education.[7]

Whatever may be the validity of the causal imputations contained in such criticism, it cannot be denied, unfortunately, that many of its characterizations of modern society are well founded; it is certainly not the intent of the following comments to dispute them. It must nevertheless be noted that the implied judgment, according to which the quality of modern life is inferior to that of earlier societies unburdened by an institutionalized natural science, is based on a definite set of preferences or values in terms of which human history is surveyed. But while it is clear that there is nothing reprehensible in employing definite standards of valuation (for example, such as are involved in Catholic Christianity), such standards need to be made explicit and should not be assumed as self-evident and above criticism. For it is sheer dogmatism to assume that only one conception of spiritual excellence is valid; and it is the height of discourtesy and parochialism to damn a society as immoral simply because its standards of excellence differ from one's own. Moreover, comparative judgments as to the happiness of men are notoriously untrustworthy, unless they are based upon objective measures of well-being. And if the material conditions of life are discounted as indications of "true" happiness, the critic's evaluations of different cultures are a better guide to his own preferences and loyalties than to the ostensible subject-matter of his judgment.

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[7] In the essay "Science, Philosophy and Faith," *op. cit.*, p. 182. Neo-Thomists have no monopoly in the making of such casual imputations. Thus, in his essay "Fact and Value in Social Science," Professor Frank Knight writes as follows: "In the field of social policy, the pernicious notion of instrumentalism, resting on the claim or assumption of a parallelism between social and natural science is actually one of the most serious of the sources of danger which threaten destruction to the values of what we have called civilization. . . . It is a serious reflection that the unsatisfactory state of affairs in social science has largely resulted from the very progress of science. . . ." *Science and Man*, (edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen), pp. 325-6.

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Let us turn to the causal imputations contained in the criticism under consideration. Almost no argument is required to show that if the growth of science may validly be held responsible for the ills of modern society, then the fact that men marry may no less validly be declared the cause of the evils of divorce. For surely, divorce would be impossible unless men first married, just as our present social distresses would not exist unless the advance of scientific knowledge had first made possible our present institutional structures. But to convert marriage into the cause of divorce, and the advance of secular knowledge into the cause of social ills, is to convert the *context* in which problems arise into an *agent* responsible for our inability to master them. As well argue that in order to eliminate the evils of divorce men must stop getting married, as recommend the de-secularization of modern society as a solution for its difficulties; in either case the conversion of context into cause is an unintelligent performance. The development of science has brought with it new opportunities for the exercise of human energies, and has helped set the stage for the emergence of new problems. How many of these problems have remained unsolved because vested interests and the cake of custom have prevented the application to them of the methods of controlled inquiry which the natural sciences use so successfully, it is difficult to judge. But in any event, the indictment of scientific intelligence as solely responsible for our present difficulties not only involves an arbitrary selection of one factor from a complex of others distinguishable in the social scene; it arbitrarily rejects the one instrument from which a resolution of these difficulties may reasonably be expected.

Consider, finally, the charge that science "cannot determine values," and that therefore the apprehension of the elements of a good life must be obtained through some form of emotional experience. Now whatever be one's view as to the nature of values—whether they are regarded as relative or absolute, dependent on human preferences or not—it must be admitted that a science (such as astronomy) which does not concern itself with values and which does not contain value-terms in its vocabulary, is incompetent to establish value judgments. The thesis that *some* sciences cannot determine values is thus trivially true. On the other hand,

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every rational appraisal of values must take cognizance of the findings of the natural and social sciences; for if the existential conditions and consequences of the realization of values are not noted, acceptance of a scheme of values is a species of undisciplined romanticism. Accordingly, unless values are to be affirmed on the basis of uncontrolled intuition and impulse, all the elements of scientific analysis—observation, imaginative reconstruction, dialectic elaboration of hypotheses, and experimental verification —must be employed. Knowledge of biology and hygiene are indeed not sufficient for an adequate conception of the moral life; but if one may judge from the historical functions of some philosophic and theologic ideas in perpetuating economic inequality and human slavery, and in sanctioning the brutal shedding of human blood, neither is a knowledge of philosophy and theology.

It is often urged that what is good for man lies outside the province of scientific method, because the determination of human goods requires a sympathetic understanding of the human heart and a sensitive, individualized perception of the qualities of human personality; and the exercise of such powers, it is maintained, has no place in the procedures of science. But this objection rests, at bottom, on a failure to distinguish between the psychological and sociological conditions under which ideas originate, and the validity of those ideas. Thus, it is reported of Schiller that he used to place a rotting apple on his desk for the stimulus the odor of the fruit provided to his writing; but while this is an interesting item about the conditions under which Schiller obtained his inspirations, it has no bearing on the issue as to quality of his poetry. Similarly, the unusual circumstances—whether personal or social —under which many seers and religious prophets obtained their visions are not relevant in a consideration of the soundness of their moral exhortations. More generally, the psychology and the sociology of research are not identical with its logic. Those who disparage the application of scientific methods to the evaluation of human goods, on the ground that those methods exclude the exercise of a sympathetic imagination, are not only mistaken in their factual allegations; they are also well on the road to identifying the sheer vividness and the emotional overtones of ideas with their validity.

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William Carlos Williams

THE SEMBLABLES

That red brick monastery in
the suburbs over against the dust-
hung acreage of the unfinished
and all but subterranean

munitions plant: those high
brick walls behind which at Easter
the little orphans and bastards
in white gowns sing their Latin

responses to the hoary ritual
while frankincense and myrrh
round out the dark chapel making
an enclosed sphere of it

of which they are the worm:
that cell outside the city beside
the polluted stream and dump
heap, uncomplaining, and the field

of upended stones with a photo
under glass fastened here and there
to one of them near the deeply
carved name to distinguish it:

that trinity of slate gables
the unembellished windows piling
up, the chapel with its round
window between the dormitories

peaked by the bronze belfry
peaked in turn by the cross,
verdegris . faces all silent
that miracle that has burst sexless

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from between the carrot rows.
Leafless white birches, their
empty tendrils swaying lazily in
the all but no breeze guard

behind the spiked monastery fence
the sacred statuary. But ranks
of brilliant car-tops row on row
give back in all his glory the

late November sun and hushed
attend, before that tumbled
ground, those sightless walls
and shovelled entrances where no

one but a lonesome cop swinging
his club gives sign, that agony
within where the wrapt machines
are praying . . .

Kenneth Patchen

THE TEMPLE OF DIANA

O an untemptable sentry
Walks around the balconies of heaven
And a lean vague dog roots in the dirt
Of the poor . . .
To commemorate thy beauty, O lady
Of a lost city, of a world now dead . . .
Since it is little I do with judgment,
May I claim you pure and of a sin
Such as the angels have: for I am tired
Of these changes—so like stirrings of the dead;
And of the rich—whose greed places Christ
In the skull of the war; for I am tired
Of the poor—who own a world
And have eyes only for the boots of their betrayers.
I am tired of the lies . . . of the dirt

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And the murder
I am too angry to bother with this poem
About the beauty of the world
Who cares a damn about that now

THE BATTLE OF HASEN

Stirred . . . the fur-toothed graves
Of young boys . . . a thousand slain
In the time it would take to do love
With a pretty girl
Or think of a new God. The leagues
Of carrying the slaughter has . . . these fallen
Meanly touch death, their dying
Is such a used thing . . . O the moonplains
Of wandering their terrible hour chooses. . . . This
Is a man. You are not to kill him.
This is a man. He has a poor time in the world.
You are not to kill him.
This is a man. There is a purpose in his being here.
You are not to kill him.
Eyes of the wounded . . . the shining tree
Rooted up by a monster. Shall they manage
To lie here in the rain? What do they cross to
In the smoke of so much terror?
This is a man. You are not to kill him.

John Frederick Nims

POOLROOM

When children's day is over and nurses lay
Their little kelsons in a feathery port,
With chromium tooth and fluorine-scarlet lip
Grins open now the emporium of sport.
Carefree in earnest, sombre women bowl,
And highschool fry are loud in many a shoal.
Through blue narcotic fog, tables of game

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Swim undulant to the golden eye of beer,
Standing like wharves, and in their sunken deck
The colored mice collide and flee in fear
As some to their ultimate Thule clicked and tossed
Plunge in the purple bayou, fathoms lost.
Things of all color on the table live:
The nineball is a bronze eel in the moss;
The luminous three like a flamingo flies
In the green sky forever, and still across
The ivory garden rolls the shadow of fate:
That midnight ambulance, the sable eight.
Stricter than merchants of a hard bazaar
The rubber euclids in the cushion lie,
In sinai-flash their forks of anger deal
Law to all orbits of that carom sky.
The elegant brow their bitter lightnings vex.
Darkie or drunk is subtler haruspex.
The players lean; the tiny balls like bass
Swim mimic in the mirror of each eye.
Hither we drift from oaths of love or pain,
Forgetting the wings and tracers of the sky,
Forgetting what cueball follows, shaped like a train,
Or a Packard shipwrecked on the curbs of rain.

MAGAZINE STAND

Here gleams the grotto of our lacquered saints.
Their locks are lightning and their eyes a knife.
They and the flooded angels who see God
Alone take straight the stinging scotch of life.
They stride the world, gather with magic glove
War's angry garland or the flowers of love.
Here in the urns and roses of the garden,
Her finger in the rites of nicotine,
Beauty is dreaming in her chlorine tresses,
And pastry angels of the cinema lean.
Here Petty's queen, madonna of the lathe,
Is choired with the naked saints that grin and bathe.
In nickel pots of paper, knighthood flowers:

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Cowboys are riled and beautiful with wounds;
Plummet to earth hyena-men from Mars;
The princess in delicious torture swoons;
And a blonde the nazis know with tapping hand
Panics the sanctum of the high command.
A college too: for boys and popeyed scholars
The virgin tables of all knowledge lie:
The roisterous decalogue of sport or sex
Or how to dance or in five lessons fly.
For deeper mind, the planets' knowing codes
And what the dragon of the zodiac bodes.
Mont Saint-Michel of pulp on every corner
Climbing the sky, vermilion, gold and green,
Is shrine of our ideal and perhaps holy,
The taste of God being rank and absinthe-keen:
His favorite toy the lamb with broken spring;
His favorite singer the adulterous king.

Legarde S. Doughty

STREET SONG

It comes no more an opiate kindly borne,
Like a rose through a whey-lit hall,
By matronly ghost decorously forlorn
And deftly personal.
I tell you death comes now impersonally.
There is no rueful whisper in the ear,
No inference of pause, no dignity;
Just a sound and a smear.
No cousin listens for a final word
At medicinal bed for long remembering.
Death comes street-smelling, vulgar, brash, absurd,
Just as you speak some humdrum, casual thing.
Later someone sends a boy to tell
The sexton what dark hour to sound the bell.

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Relations of Painting and Sculpture

George L. K. Morris

I.

BEFORE EXPLORING the curiously fluctuating connections between painting and sculpture, the decisive properties of each must be made clearly distinguishable. Many qualities are certainly common to both art-forms. Essential divergences are also apparent, and it is upon the latter that I shall dwell at some length; certain opposing characteristics may seem too obvious to mention, whereas others have proved sufficiently elusive for the leading artists throughout whole periods (often unknowingly) to evoke from one art-form the properties inherent in the other. I know of no other expressive field in which a comparable transposition could have been possible; when music or painting is spoken of as "literary," for instance, we mean the character and inclination of the work. But when a painting is conceived as sculpture we mean that a realization has taken place opposed to the very nature of the medium. Moreover, far from detracting from the quality, such paradoxical metamorphoses may be said to have produced some of the finest achievements in the past.

I might illustrate the extent of the confusion by a reminiscence of my early (academic) painting-instructors. I can recall how it was drilled into pupils that painting *was* sculpture,—a sort of color-sculpture, conceived through such readily-apprehended symbols as shading, contour, and chiaroscuro,—for this indeed had been the academic approach ever since the Italian Renaissance. My confusion may be imagined when somewhere I came across Cézanne's observation that it had taken him forty years to discover that "painting was *not* sculpture." Without an understanding of the former tradition it is impossible to feel the revolutionary import of the latter.

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It is easy to point out that a painting is flat,—hence must be regarded from a comparatively limited radius, and thus can never change either its formal aspect or the juxtaposition of its shapes beyond the limits of light-variation. A statue, on the other hand, must stand inspection from any number of angles, and the relation of forms is constantly changing,—even a bas-relief can vary surprisingly as the point of view is shifted. But a painting must rely upon illusion for whatever three-dimensional or "real" activity takes place within the limits of its frame. Not only the illustrational but the tactile appeal must be made credible by tricks or symbols that fool the eye yet at the same time must provide esthetic satisfaction. As the cinema depends on a defect of the human eye, without which we would see only a rapid succession of images, so the painter presupposes a gullibility of the mind that will automatically accept his plastic symbols. I refer not only to such specific signs as shadows which serve to identify the shape and relative position of the forms, but colors that tend to advance or recede, not to mention the countless resources which the painter unconsciously transcribes out of sensations experienced in the world around him. Sculpture, by contrast, is thoroughly frank, and the response to its appeal is apparent and instantaneous.* Anyone, upon glancing at a statue, feels instinctively that he can grasp it and run his fingers over it completely.

It is natural that the relative scope of the two "free" plastic art-forms should have been often compared. Architecture has usually escaped such comparison, differentiated, no doubt, by its utilitarian restrictions. Michael Angelo was reticent about pronouncing a preference, but finally admitted that it was sculpture which was the greater because it was "harder to do." (This contention elicited an opposite conclusion from Dr. Johnson which justly aroused Boswell's dismay: "Painting consumes labor not disproportionate to its effect; but a fellow will hack half a year

*I am indebted to Meyer Schapiro for calling my attention to a sect in the Byzantine period known as the Iconoclasts, who provide a pertinent instance of this basic divergence between painting and sculpture. The Iconoclasts bitterly opposed sculpture as being so "real" as to be idolatrous, although of painting they approved. Aside from incalculable destruction, they forced the adoption of new rules as to what constituted sculpture. (In these we have a curious anticipation of the sculpture-definitions enforced by the U. S. Customs, that were aired in the famous Brancusi case.)

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. . . to make something that hardly resembles a man. The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty. You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot.") Leonardo opposes the verdict of Michael Angelo on broader but hardly more enlightened grounds; in his *Notebooks* he confesses to being a reliable authority on the subject, as he has pursued both art-forms equally,—and, he leaves no room for doubt,—painting is very much greater than sculpture. His point resolves into claims (which would certainly have confused the Iconoclasts) that it is *painting* which presents so many possibilities for naturalistic effects, such as light and the weather, and these are denied to sculpture; Leonardo's closing sentence I find significant, not only for the trend of his particular tradition, but for the subject before us as well: "the lines of sculptors do not seem in any way true; those of painters may appear to extend a hundred miles beyond the work itself."

Qualitative comparisons here seem beyond the point, as on such grounds the two have always been, for me at least, incomparable. By thus contrasting them, however, Leonardo has hinted at something that I do not feel in any way makes painting *greater* than sculpture*, as he suggests, but can nevertheless unfold a crucial divergence. We might designate it as the "possibilities of scale." For painting, scale is illimitable, and this is indeed a resource to which sculpture cannot pretend. A statue is always fated to remain the size that it actually is. The Statue of Liberty, for instance, expressively may achieve nothing more than a shallow prettiness, yet I never saw anyone who did not realize at a glance that it was very big; the same goes for every colossus from the Sphinx to Gutzon Borglum. Such an interpretation of scale has nothing to do with grandeur or nobility,—it signifies merely that sculpture is always a part of the world, and the world provides other objects, if only the spectator himself, that will eventually reveal the actual size. This may be disguised through an exaggerated *mise-en-scène*, as in the sculptures on St. Peter's. For a while the eye can be deceived into ignoring the great size of

*I have always been surprised at the lack of esthetic analysis in this highly intellectual period; the *Notebooks* practically ignore any internal properties of art. Presumably, such qualities as composition and plastic organization had become second-nature to an age that was esthetically grounded to so sure an extent; expressionist and realistic devices were the exciting discoveries for the artists of that time. The nineteenth century, however, has surfeited us of these, and so we now emphasize anew the long-neglected field of esthetics.

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these statues by the immensity of every architectural fragment; but the ruse is broken before very long, and the effect becomes if anything more crushing because of the early deception. At the other extreme, a Cellini figurine or a statuette from Tutankhamen's tomb may have a thousand times the grandeur of Liberty, but it is small and exquisite as well. (I know of no greater anomaly than the miniature colossi of Lachaise.) Greek sculpture, aiming always at the reproduction of humanity in an idealized form, was, in its most notable examples, quite appropriately a little larger than life-sized.

The shape and physical boundaries of a statue are defined only by the artist's conception. Paintings, on the other hand, are restricted by the canvas-limits, and from this point we push our contrast a step further. As we have seen, sculpture becomes so much a part of the world that it admits of no spatial deception. While looking at a painting, however, we step as through a window into another world, where every space and distance is bounded only by the artist's ability to realize his intention. I do not suggest that the spectator is merely lured into another locality, for through quite abstract pictures one can be similarly transported,—farther from where one stands than Leonardo's mere hundred miles. This represents no feat in itself, merely the nature of the art-form. (Even the sharpest photograph does not project such a quality to anything like the same degree.) Thus removed from the objects in the midst of which he is standing, the spectator is no longer restricted by any sense of scale. There are small pictures that become colossal and some huge ones that no one considers particularly big. For the illusion of scale depends only on the relation of the parts that fill the painted rectangle. The painter is indeed in command of a "magical world" which can become at once his freedom and his downfall. The history of art reveals a fluctuation somewhat akin to breathing, with the artist now lost in a maze of picturesquely remote illusions, followed by a return to sculptural "hereness" from which he is re-equipped to start again.

II.

Let us now penetrate behind the painter's "window" and between and around the sculptor's manifest forms. From different aspects the two forms of art now begin to reveal divergences

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within their own limits. There are some paintings, for example, that hold us off like a wall, others that we can get into just a little way; there are sculptures, too, that lure us in as dramatically as any painting. Perhaps the natural properties that we were examining so carefully are capable of considerable latitude. And, indeed, if that had been the limit of the subject we would hardly find a recurrence in nearly every art-cycle of a perennial impulse for fusing the two. In fact, only primitive or savage artists seem to express themselves straightforwardly, without any attempt at fusion at all; in sophisticated periods they are approached unconsciously by artists who are relatively disconnected from the complications of contemporary life (Brancusi, for instance, was always an unhesitant sculptor, and the Douanier Rousseau similarly direct as a painter). When the fusion becomes too oppressive the trend among artists consciously veers back to a fresh tightening of the limits of their respective art-forms, as evidenced by the Fauve discovery of African sculpture; the refreshing "unity" apparent in savage work* is traceable to an instinctive feeling for the separate functions of painting and sculpture.

Whole periods can be cited when the expressive aim of the dominant art-form was at variance with the natural properties of the form itself. Romanesque and early Gothic art was primarily "painting" in its address, habitually conceived within fixed limits and against a background (sculpture that fits within a frame on a façade, or a lunette over a doorway) to be observed from in front like a picture. It may seem ironical that the sculpture, in the northern countries at least, transcends the painting in quality. The early Renaissance in Italy produced paintings that were freely executed and very "brush-conscious." Then, in the fifteenth century, Mantegna (through the school of Squarcione) "discovered" Greek sculpture, and at once the change was complete, and remained so in regard to form-construction until broken up by the effect-painting of the Impressionists. In certain paintings of Mantegna the forms are so skillfully rendered in sculptural solidity that one is almost fooled into believing them tinted bas-reliefs. From then until the Baroque the triumph of the sculptural tradition was complete, although paradoxically there were comparatively few great sculptors and such an array of major painters

*There is, of course, sophisticated as well as primitive savage sculpture; the famous Benin bronzes begin to show markedly the properties of painting.

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as the world had never known. This alone substantiates our previous view that an exchange of properties in no way affects the quality of either art-form. Rather, under certain historical conditions the transposition may be said to enhance it.

We have now to consider the manner in which the painter presents the world that he has created. For painting is, of course, not the only means through which it can be presented. A photograph seen through a stereoscope is like a window into a world; but no one would feel any relation there with painting. A painting is delivered on its own terms, which is essentially through the application of colored mud upon a completely flattened surface; sculpture is also delivered on its terms,—a finished material, whatever it may be, removed from the artist's hands, which takes its place with the other objects of the world. The paintings which seem to assert themselves most intensely *as paintings* thus present a sort of double vision; I believe this to be what led Cézanne to distinguish so emphatically between painting and sculpture. The relation of the forms fixes the three-dimensional planes and "between-spaces," while the technical delivery continually returns the eye to the picture-plane. A good example may be offered by some famous decorations which were never *painted* at all yet profoundly project the qualities of painting,—the Byzantine mosaics at Ravenna,—which are flat decorations, solidly integrated with architecture, yet open up before us an expansive detached world. The depths do not have the infinity of Baroque decoration, but on the other hand one is not thrust back as from an Egyptian wall-painting. In the mosaics there is a definite recession of planes and a strong modelling of the figures, yet over all lurks the mosaic-technique, creating a surface life with its occasional stone of intensified color that acts as a spot to keep the eye unconsciously on the surface. This is the essence of the true painting where the individual brush-strokes perform a similar service. The High Renaissance, with its austere sculptural tradition tended to obliterate the brush-strokes, and the picture-surface fell back to the surfaces of the forms themselves. In the next century, influenced by the painter-like Venetians*, even sculpture succumbed

*In regard to the art of many periods (the Baroque perhaps most of all) it is impossible to be dogmatic, for the degrees of fusion differed in individual cases; it can only be generalized, I think, that the late Venetians were painter-like in their conceptions yet sculptural in their execution. And there are many artists even among those I mention in modern times whom it is difficult to classify through every phase.

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to the painter's conception. As Wöfflin pointed out, Bernini removed from stone its "immediately tangible character," as opposed to Michael Angelo, who spoke through his outline, in painting and sculpture alike. For Michael Angelo chiaroscuro was a means toward the intensification of plastic values, for Bernini form vanishes in a wild play of light and shade. In modern times the Impressionists, followed by Cézanne and Renoir, integrated the painting technique so firmly into their stylistic procedure that Rodin the sculptor fell for the painted surface, and his bronzes, on which the finger-marks appear so delicately, indicate that the painters were again taking control of art, a short generation after Courbet had somewhat ponderously worked out a new sculptural approach.

III.

Through the contemporary period it becomes more difficult for us to assort the definite trends. The Cubists held themselves within the limits of their own art-form to an extent not readily appreciated. For Cubism was really an outgrowth of Impressionism, incorporating the impressionist technique into a new solidity. Pasted papers and lettering suggest tactility and a "reality" akin to sculpture, yet wherever the Cubists relied on brush or pencil the marks fairly tingle with the painter's touch. Picasso is the most painter-like of all, and nowhere is the chameleon-like aspect of his character more apparent than in his recent sculpture, which is just as completely sculpturesque. Léger, on the other hand, is quite otherwise, for Léger was never really a Cubist at all. His world of pipes and mechanical fragments was conceived as sculpture, and as such, although no match qualitatively for Picasso and Braque, seems when exhibited with the Cubists to be at the same time more "modern" and more primitive. It is Mondrian, however, who goes farthest toward giving us sculpture,—although the word "object" might better characterize one of his canvases. Mondrian's paintings preclude any possibility of entrance at all; the very frame (set behind the canvas-surface) pushes the area forward instead of letting the spectator into the wall. I find highly significant the contention which Mondrian once put forward verbally, that mural-painting was "wrong." It is wrong for him indeed because he would not have his pictures a *part* of anything; they are free objects which one can touch and

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move around, as much a part of the world as any statue; they remain the strongest examples yet conceived of painting projected as sculpture. Previously the sculptural traditions had presented forms *inside* the painting realized in sculptural terms. But Mondrian gives us a thing in itself,—and here we have something entirely new, a fragment of the modern world, concise, compact, and complete. I do not infer that Mondrian is the only one to propose the new conception; he has merely presented it with the least compromise and perhaps the sharpest sensibility. Arp (whose work in actual sculpture has been considerable) is always established as a true sculptor, even in his paintings and papier-collés; while Miró, on the other hand, so profoundly influenced by Arp in regard to shape and contour, is just as emphatically the painter, opening up his alluring world even when building an object out of stones and shells. It is in this respect that he is surrealist, for Surrealism depends for its very existence on its ability to *transport* the spectator.

The contemporary sculptors curiously parallel Mondrian's direction in reverse. The Italian Futurists made a deliberate attempt to coördinate figure and background,—as they themselves put it "to throw the figure open like a window and make part of it the surroundings in which it exists." Lipschitz and Pevsner have similarly opened up their sculptures as if to enclose the surroundings, while Gabo's transparent materials, instead of "refusing" the spectator likewise seem to lure him in. Ben Nicholson's reliefs, which appear to stem from Mondrian, are often projected in reverse; they are actual reliefs, in three-dimensions, but touched as though a painter were intent on removing them from the realm of sculpture. Nicholson's recent *paintings* do not partake of such a surface, and seem to offer much flatter resistance than his reliefs. It is Calder's mobiles, however, that offer the most complete example of sculpture in terms of painting. Every emphasis is *against* three-dimensional form and is in fact directed toward rhythm and away from form altogether. Calder moreover bears a relation to the art-form he approaches which appears no less internal than that of Mondrian. The latter, as we have seen, does not "shape" sculpturally, as did the Renaissance painters, but achieves a sculptural entity; while Calder in no sense exhibits the painter's touch but opens up for us the spatial content of the painter. I have

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further observed that shadows cast on a wall by Calder's mobiles are apt to be more dramatic than the works themselves, and like paintings, tend to discard a sense of actual scale; when in motion even the newer province of the cinema seems invaded here.

That in the last decade painting and sculpture should have tended to fuse I find entirely in keeping with the natural growth of the modern concept. The decisive innovation that differentiates modern art from all that preceded is a novel relation to "life." Instead of an illustration of life or reflection of life in the world outside we have seen that the non-objective painter creates a living unity,—an object that, through an adjustment of sensibility and tension, can become an organism in its own right. Cubism delivered the first push in this direction, then retraced its steps and re-incorporated it with the external world. The constructivist and abstract artists took up where the cubists had left off and the break has become firmly established. It was natural that in their desire to create the living *thing* the painters should have moved toward sculpture, in which the basic properties stem from the object to begin with. The painted Construction, which represents the most conscious attempt to seal this fusion tightly, was quite naturally born of this period.

The constructivist tendencies threw up a wall of resistance to assert their objectivity. The more recent abstract exhibitions (we are of course now limited to what we can see in the western hemisphere) have divulged, I think, a re-opening of the picture-surfaces, and a new clarity in the exposition of painting and sculpture on their own terms. It may be that the recent external events have demanded a return of the painter-touch and of a world where the spectator can enter at least a little way. There is much to be assimilated before we can see to what extent, if at all, the painter can re-open his fabric to shapes of the world outside without disturbing the terrible concentration and organic life of the new conception; and how far the sculptor can enclose himself again within the clear limits of the new materials at his command.

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Of This Time, of That Place

Lionel Trilling

IT WAS A FINE September day. By noon it would be summer again but now it was true autumn with a touch of chill in the air. As Joseph Howe stood on the porch of the house in which he lodged, ready to leave for his first class of the year, he thought with pleasure of the long indoor days that were coming. It was a moment when he could feel glad of his profession.

On the lawn the peach tree was still in fruit and young Hilda Aiken was taking a picture of it. She held the camera tight against her chest. She wanted the sun behind her but she did not want her own long morning shadow in the foreground. She raised the camera but that did not help, and she lowered it but that made things worse. She twisted her body to the left, then to the right. In the end she had to step out of the direct line of the sun. At last she snapped the shutter and wound the film with intense care.

Howe, watching her from the porch, waited for her to finish and called good morning. She turned, startled, and almost sullenly lowered her glance. In the year Howe had lived at the Aikens', Hilda had accepted him as one of her family, but since his absence of the summer she had grown shy. Then suddenly she lifted her head and smiled at him, and the humorous smile confirmed his pleasure in the day. She picked up her bookbag and set off for school.

The handsome houses on the streets to the college were not yet fully awake but they looked very friendly. Howe went by the Bradby house where he would be a guest this evening at the first dinner-party of the year. When he had gone the length of the picket fence, the whitest in town, he turned back. Along the path there was a fine row of asters and he went through the gate and picked one for his buttonhole. The Bradbys would be pleased if they happened to see him invading their lawn and the knowledge of this made him even more comfortable.

He reached the campus as the hour was striking. The students were hurrying to their classes. He himself was in no hurry. He

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stopped at his dim cubicle of an office and lit a cigarette. The prospect of facing his class had suddenly presented itself to him and his hands were cold, the lawful seizure of power he was about to make seemed momentous. Waiting did not help. He put out his cigarette, picked up a pad of theme paper and went to his classroom.

As he entered, the rattle of voices ceased and the twenty-odd freshmen settled themselves and looked at him appraisingly. Their faces seemed gross, his heart sank at their massed impassivity, but he spoke briskly.

"My name is Howe," he said and turned and wrote it on the blackboard. The carelessness of the scrawl confirmed his authority. He went on, "My office is 412 Slemp Hall and my office-hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from eleven-thirty to twelve-thirty."

He wrote, "M., W., F., 11:30-12:30." He said, "I'll be very glad to see any of you at that time. Or if you can't come then, you can arrange with me for some other time."

He turned again to the blackboard and spoke over his shoulder. "The text for the course is Jarman's *Modern Plays*, revised edition. The Co-op has it in stock." He wrote the name, underlined "revised edition" and waited for it to be taken down in the new notebooks.

When the bent heads were raised again he began his speech of prospectus. "It is hard to explain—." he said, and paused as they composed themselves. "It is hard to explain what a course like this is intended to do. We are going to try to learn something about modern literature and something about prose composition."

As he spoke, his hands warmed and he was able to look directly at the class. Last year on the first day the faces had seemed just as cloddish, but as the term wore on they became gradually alive and quite likable. It did not seem possible that the same thing could happen again.

"I shall not lecture in this course," he continued. "Our work will be carried on by discussion and we will try to learn by an exchange of opinion. But you will soon recognize that my opinion is worth more than anyone else's here."

He remained grave as he said it, but two boys understood and laughed. The rest took permission from them and laughed too.

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All Howe's private ironies protested the vulgarity of the joke but the laughter made him feel benign and powerful.

When the little speech was finished, Howe picked up the pad of paper he had brought. He announced that they would write an extemporaneous theme. Its subject was traditional, "Who I am and why I came to Dwight College." By now the class was more at ease and it gave a ritualistic groan of protest. Then there was a stir as fountain-pens were brought out and the writing arms of the chairs were cleared and the paper was passed about. At last all the heads bent to work and the room became still.

Howe sat idly at his desk. The sun shone through the tall clumsy windows. The cool of the morning was already passing. There was a scent of autumn and of varnish, and the stillness of the room was deep and oddly touching. Now and then a student's head was raised and scratched in the old elaborate students' pantomime that calls the teacher to witness honest intellectual effort.

Suddenly a tall boy stood within the frame of the open door. "Is this," he said, and thrust a large nose into a college catalogue, "is this the meeting place of English 1A? The section instructed by Dr. Joseph Howe?"

He stood on the very sill of the door, as if refusing to enter until he was perfectly sure of all his rights. The class looked up from work, found him absurd and gave a low mocking cheer.

The teacher and the new student, with equal pointedness, ignored the disturbance. Howe nodded to the boy, who pushed his head forward and then jerked it back in a wide elaborate arc to clear his brow of a heavy lock of hair. He advanced into the room and halted before Howe, almost at attention. In a loud clear voice he announced, "I am Tertan, Ferdinand R., reporting at the direction of Head of Department Vincent."

The heraldic formality of this statement brought forth another cheer. Howe looked at the class with a sternness he could not really feel, for there was indeed something ridiculous about this boy. Under his displeased regard the rows of heads dropped to work again. Then he touched Tertan's elbow, led him up to the desk and stood so as to shield their conversation from the class.

"We are writing an extemporaneous theme," he said. "The subject is, 'Who I am and why I came to Dwight College'."

He stripped a few sheets from the pad and offered them to

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the boy. Tertan hesitated and then took the paper but he held it only tentatively. As if with the effort of making something clear, he gulped, and a slow smile fixed itself on his face. It was at once knowing and shy.

"Professor," he said, "to be perfectly fair to my classmates" —he made a large gesture over the room—"and to you"—he inclined his head to Howe—"this would not be for me an extemporaneous subject."

Howe tried to understand. "You mean you've already thought about it—you've heard we always give the same subject? That doesn't matter."

Again the boy ducked his head and gulped. It was the gesture of one who wishes to make a difficult explanation with perfect candor. "Sir," he said, and made the distinction with great care, "the topic I did not expect but I have given much ratiocination to the subject."

Howe smiled and said, "I don't think that's an unfair advantage. Just go ahead and write."

Tertan narrowed his eyes and glanced sidewise at Howe. His strange mouth smiled. Then in quizzical acceptance, he ducked his head, threw back the heavy dank lock, dropped into a seat with a great loose noise and began to write rapidly.

The room fell silent again and Howe resumed his idleness. When the bell rang, the students who had groaned when the task had been set now groaned again because they had not finished. Howe took up the papers and held the class while he made the first assignment. When he dismissed it, Tertan bore down on him, his slack mouth held ready for speech.

"Some professors," he said, "are pedants. They are Dryasdusts. However, some professors are free souls and creative spirits. Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche were all professors." With this pronouncement he paused. "It is my opinion," he continued, "that you occupy the second category."

Howe looked at the boy in surprise and said with good-natured irony, "With Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche?"

Not only Tertan's hand and head but his whole awkward body waved away the stupidity. "It is the kind and not the quantity of the kind," he said sternly.

Rebuked, Howe said as simply and seriously as he could,

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"It would be nice to think so." He added, "Of course I am not a professor."

This was clearly a disappointment but Tertan met it. "In the French sense," he said with composure. "Generically, a teacher."

Suddenly he bowed. It was such a bow, Howe fancied, as a stage-director might teach an actor playing a medieval student who takes leave of Abelard—stiff, solemn, with elbows close to the body and feet together. Then, quite as suddenly, he turned and left.

A queer fish, and as soon as Howe reached his office he sifted through the batch of themes and drew out Tertan's. The boy had filled many sheets with his unformed headlong scrawl. "Who am I?" he had begun. "Here, in a mundane, not to say commercialized academe, is asked the question which from time long immemorably out of mind has accreted doubts and thoughts in the psyche of man to pester him as a nuisance. Whether in St. Augustine (or Austin as sometimes called) or Miss Bashkirtsieff or Frederic Amiel or Empedocles, or in less lights of the intellect than these, this posed question has been ineluctable."

Howe took out his pencil. He circled "academe" and wrote "vocab." in the margin. He underlined "time long immemorably out of mind" and wrote "Diction!" But this seemed inadequate for what was wrong. He put down his pencil and read ahead to discover the principle of error in the theme. "Today as ever, in spite of gloomy prophets of the dismal science (economics) the question is uninvalidated. Out of the starry depths of heaven hurtles this spear of query demanding to be caught on the shield of the mind ere it pierces the skull and the limbs be unstrung."

Baffled but quite caught, Howe read on. "Materialism, by which is meant the philosophic concept and not the moral idea, provides no aegis against the question which lies beyond the tangible (metaphysics). Existence without alloy is the question presented. Environment and heredity relegated aside, the rags and old clothes of practical life discarded, the name and the instrumentality of livelihood do not, as the prophets of the dismal science insist on in this connection, give solution to the interrogation which not from the professor merely but veritably from the cosmos is given. I think, therefore I am (cogito etc.) but who

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am I? Tertan I am, but what is Tertan? Of this time, of that place, of some parentage, what does it matter?"

Existence without alloy: the phrase established itself. Howe put aside Tertan's paper and at random picked up another. "I am Arthur J. Casebeer, Jr.," he read. "My father is Arthur J. Casebeer and my grandfather was Arthur J. Casebeer before him. My mother is Nina Wimble Casebeer. Both of them are college graduates and my father is in insurance. I was born in St. Louis eighteen years ago and we still make our residence there."

Arthur J. Casebeer, who knew who he was, was less interesting than Tertan, but more coherent. Howe picked up Tertan's paper again. It was clear that none of the routine marginal comments, no "sent. str." or "punct." or "vocab." could cope with this torrential rhetoric. He read ahead, contenting himself with underscoring the errors against the time when he should have the necessary "conference" with Tertan.

It was a busy and official day of cards and sheets, arrangements and small decisions and it gave Howe pleasure. Even when it was time to attend the first of the weekly Convocations he felt the charm of the beginning of things when intention is still innocent and uncorrupted by effort. He sat among the young instructors on the platform and joined in their humorous complaints at having to assist at the ceremony but actually he got a clear satisfaction from the ritual of prayer and prosy speech and even from wearing his academic gown. And when the Convocation was over the pleasure continued as he crossed the campus, exchanging greetings with men he had not seen since the spring. They were people who did not yet, and perhaps never would, mean much to him, but in a year they had grown amiably to be part of his life. They were his fellow-townsmen.

The day had cooled again at sunset and there was a bright chill in the September twilight. Howe carried his voluminous gown over his arm, he swung his doctoral hood by its purple neckpiece and on his head he wore his mortarboard with its heavy gold tassel bobbing just over his eye. These were the weighty and absurd symbols of his new profession and they pleased him. At twenty-six Joseph Howe had discovered that he was neither so well off nor so bohemian as he had once thought. A small income, adequate when supplemented by a sizable cash legacy, was genteel

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poverty when the cash was all spent. And the literary life—the room at the Lafayette or the small apartment without a lease, the long summers on the Cape, the long afternoons and the social evenings—began to weary him. His writing filled his mornings and should perhaps have filled his life, yet it did not. To the amusement of his friends and with a certain sense that he was betraying his own freedom, he had used the last of his legacy for a year at Harvard. The small but respectable reputation of his two volumes of verse had proved useful—he continued at Harvard on a fellowship and when he emerged as Dr. Howe he received an excellent appointment, with prospects, at Dwight.

He had his moments of fear when all that had ever been said of the dangers of the academic life had occurred to him. But after a year in which he had tested every possibility of corruption and seduction he was ready to rest easy. His third volume of verse, most of it written in his first year of teaching, was not only ampler but, he thought, better than its predecessors.

There was a clear hour before the Bradby dinner-party and Howe looked forward to it. But he was not to enjoy it, for lying with his mail on the hall table was a copy of this quarter's issue of *Life and Letters*, to which his landlord subscribed. Its severe cover announced that its editor, Frederic Woolley, had this month contributed an essay called "Two Poets," and Howe, picking it up, curious to see who the two poets might be, felt his own name start out at him with cabalistic power—Joseph Howe. As he continued to turn the pages his hand trembled.

Standing in the dark hall, holding the neat little magazine, Howe knew that his literary contempt for Frederic Woolley meant nothing, for he suddenly understood how he respected Woolley in the way of the world. He knew this by the trembling of his hand. And of the little world as well as the great, for although the literary groups of New York might dismiss Woolley, his name carried high authority in the academic world. At Dwight it was even a revered name, for it had been here at the college that Frederic Woolley had made the distinguished scholarly career from which he had gone on to literary journalism. In middle life he had been induced to take the editorship of *Life and Letters*, a literary monthly not widely read but heavily endowed and in its pages he had carried on the defense of what he sometimes called the older

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values. He was not without wit, he had great knowledge and considerable taste and even in the full movement of the "new" literature he had won a certain respect for his refusal to accept it. In France, even in England, he would have been connected with a more robust tradition of conservatism, but America gave him an audience not much better than genteel. It was known in the college that to the subsidy of *Life and Letters* the Bradbys contributed a great part.

As Howe read, he saw that he was involved in nothing less than an event. When the Fifth Series of *Studies in Order and Value* came to be collected, this latest of Frederic Woolley's essays would not be merely another step in the old direction. Clearly and unmistakably, it was a turning point. All his literary life Woolley had been concerned with the relation of literature to mortality, religion and the private and delicate pieties and he had been unalterably opposed to all that he had called "inhuman humanitarianism." But here, suddenly, dramatically late, he had made an about-face, turning to the public life and to the humanitarian politics he had so long despised. This was the kind of incident the histories of literature make much of. Frederick Woolley was opening for himself a new career and winning a kind of new youth. He contrasted the two poets, Thomas Wormser who was admirable, Joseph Howe who was almost dangerous. He spoke of the "precious subjectivism" of Howe's verse. "In times like ours," he wrote, "with millions facing penury and want, one feels that the qualities of the *tour d'ivoire* are well-nigh inhuman, nearly insulting. The *tour d'ivoire* becomes the *tour d'ivresse* and it is not self-intoxicated poets that our people need." The essay said more: "The problem is one of meaning. I am not ignorant that the creed of the esoteric poets declares that a poem does not and should not *mean* anything, that it *is* something. But poetry is what the poet makes it, and if he is a true poet he makes what his society needs. And what is needed now is the tradition in which Mr. Wormser writes, the true tradition of poetry. The Howes do no harm, but they do no good when positive good is demanded of all responsible men. Or do the Howes indeed do no harm? Perhaps Plato would have said they do, that in some ways theirs is the Phrygian music that turns men's minds from the struggle. Certainly it is true that Thomas Wormser writes in the lucid Dorian mode which sends men into battle with evil."

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It was easy to understand why Woolley had chosen to praise Thomas Wormser. The long, lilting lines of *Corn Under Willows* hymned, as Woolley put it, the struggle for wheat in the Iowa fields and expressed the real lives of real people. But why out of the dozen more notable examples he had chosen Howe's little volume as the example of "precious subjectivism" was hard to guess. In a way it was funny, this multiplication of himself into "the Howes." And yet this becoming the multiform political symbol by whose creation Frederic Woolley gave the sign of a sudden new life, this use of him as a sacrifice whose blood was necessary for the rites of rejuvenation, made him feel oddly unclean.

Nor could Howe get rid of a certain practical resentment. As a poet he had a special and respectable place in the college life. But it might be another thing to be marked as the poet of a wilful and selfish obscurity.

As he walked to the Bradbys' Howe was a little tense and defensive. It seemed to him that all the world knew of the "attack" and agreed with it. And indeed the Bradbys had read the essay but Professor Bradby, a kind and pretentious man, said, "I see my old friend knocked you about a bit, my boy," and his wife Eugenia looked at Howe with her childlike blue eyes and said, "I shall *scold* Frederic for the untrue things he wrote about you. You aren't the least obscure." They beamed at him. In their genial snobbery they seemed to feel that he had distinguished himself. He was the leader of Howeism. He enjoyed the dinner-party as much as he had thought he would.

And in the following days, as he was more preoccupied with his duties, the incident was forgotten. His classes had ceased to be mere groups. Student after student detached himself from the mass and required or claimed a place in Howe's awareness. Of them all it was Tertan who first and most violently signalled his separate existence. A week after classes had begun Howe saw his silhouette on the frosted glass of his office door. It was motionless for a long time, perhaps stopped by the problem of whether or not to knock before entering. Howe called, "Come in!" and Tertan entered with his shambling stride.

He stood beside the desk, silent and at attention. When Howe asked him to sit down, he responded with a gesture of head

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and hand as if to say that such amenities were beside the point. Nevertheless he did take the chair. He put his ragged crammed briefcase between his legs. His face, which Howe now observed fully for the first time, was confusing, for it was made up of florid curves, the nose arched in the bone and voluted in the nostril, the mouth loose and soft and rather moist. Yet the face was so thin and narrow as to seem the very type of asceticism. Lashes of unusual length veiled the eyes and, indeed, it seemed as if there were a veil over the whole countenance. Before the words actually came, the face screwed itself into an attitude of preparation for them.

"You can confer with me now?" Tertan said.

"Yes, I'd be glad to. There are several things in your two themes I want to talk to you about." Howe reached for the packet of themes on his desk and sought for Tertan's. But the boy was waving them away.

"These are done perforce," he said. "Under the pressure of your requirement. They are not significant, mere duties." Again his great hand flapped vaguely to dismiss his themes. He leaned forward and gazed at his teacher.

"You are," he said, "a man of letters? You are a poet?" It was more declaration than question.

"I should like to think so," Howe said.

At first Tertan accepted the answer with a show of appreciation, as though the understatement made a secret between himself and Howe. Then he chose to misunderstand. With his shrewd and disconcerting control of expression, he presented to Howe a puzzled grimace. "What does that mean?" he said.

Howe retracted the irony. "Yes. I am a poet." It sounded strange to say.

"That," Tertan said, "is a wonder." He corrected himself with his ducking head. "I mean that is wonderful."

Suddenly he dived at the miserable briefcase between his legs, put it on his knees and began to fumble with the catch, all intent on the difficulty it presented. Howe noted that his suit was worn thin, his shirt almost unclean. He became aware, even, of a vague and musty odor of garments worn too long in unaired rooms. Tertan conquered the lock and began to concentrate upon a search

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Theatre Chronicle: Chaos Is Come Again

Mary McCarthy

Thornton Wilder's latest play, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, is a spoof on history. For all its air of experimentalism, its debt to Joyce, as yet unacknowledged, its debt to Olsen and Johnson, paid in full, it belongs to a tradition familiar and dear to the Anglo-Saxon heart. That is the tradition of *The Road to Rome, Caesar and Cleopatra, Hamlet* in modern dress, *Julius Caesar* in uniforms. Its mainspring is the anachronistic joke, a joke both provincial and self-assertive, a joke which insists that the Roman in his toga is simply a bourgeois citizen wearing a sheet, and that Neanderthal man with his bear-skin and his club is at heart an insurance salesman at a fancy-dress ball. The joke has a double fascination which it exerts on the middle-class public and the middle-class playwright alike. In the first place, it is conservative: it affirms the eternity of capitalism, which it identifies with "human nature," and it consoles us for the flatness of the present by extending that flatness over the past, so that, whatever our sufferings, we shall at least not be racked by envy, that most dangerous of human passions. In the second place, it is sacrilegious, for it denies time and history, and this, to the modern ear, is the moral equivalent of *hubris*, of ancestor-desecration, of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Hence it is that such works as *The Skin of Our Teeth* almost invariably have an appearance of daring: the shock value of *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, say, did not derive from its rather mild sexual impropriety. Moreover, art and culture generally find themselves within easy range of the blasphemer (and this is only logical, since culture is an historical phenomenon); you get Mark Twain or Mr. Wilder's third act where the philosophers appear as half-audible quotations from their works, quotations which can only be introduced after a great deal of apologetic discussion: "I don't suppose it means anything," says the stage-manager. "It's just a kind of poetic effect." Mr. Wilder, being a professor, wants to have it both ways: he wants the philosophers, but at the same time he does not want the audience to think that he is an ass.

The plot and structure of *The Skin of Our Teeth* must by this time be in the public domain. Everybody knows that the play deals with three great crises in human history, the return of the Ice Age, the Flood, the War, any war at all or this war in particular. It is Mr. Wilder's fancy that all these events happened to a man named George Antrobus of 216 Cedar Street, Excelsior, New Jersey, father of two, president of the Ancient Order of Mammals, inventor, soldier and occasional philanderer. Man, then, enlightened ape, is seen as the eternal husband, whose destiny is an endless commuter's trip between the Home and the Office, the poles of the human sphere. The trip may not be broken on pain of flood, ice, fascism; a stopover with the Other Woman will result in a disaster of millenial proportions. "Oh, oh, oh! Six o'clock and

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the master not home yet," says the maid, opening the play. In other words, if George misses the five-fifteen, Chaos is come again. This is the moral of the piece. Man, says Mr. Wilder, from time to time gets puffed up with pride and prosperity, he grows envious, covetous, lecherous, forgets his conjugal duties, goes whoring after women; portents of disaster appear, but he is too blind to see them; in the end, with the help of the little woman, who has never taken any stock in either pleasure or wisdom, he escapes by the skin of his teeth. *Sicut erat in principio. . . .*

It is a curious view of life. It displays elements of Christian morality. Christ, however, was never so simple, but on the contrary allowed always for paradox (the woman taken in adultery, the story of Martha and Mary, "Consider the lilies of the field") and indeed regarded the family as an obstacle to salvation. No, it is not the Christian view, but a kind of bowdlerized version of it, such as might have been imparted to a class of taxpayer's children by a New England Sunday school teacher forty years ago. And here we find again Mr. Wilder's perennial nostalgia, a nostalgia not for the past but for an eternal childhood, for the bedrock of middle-class family life, for *the old Sunday evenings at home with the tinkling piano our guide.* It is a nostalgia which found a pure and lyrical expression in *Our Town,* but which has made its way more furtively into *The Skin of Our Teeth* and lurks there as an impediment both to action and to thought, for at the end of each act the play hits the suburban family group, stumbles over it, and comes to a halt; the repetition is inevitable, but not dramatic: the only conflict is the conflict between the submerged idea and the form, and an encounter with an iceberg is spectacular but neither comic nor tragic. The play in general suffers from a certain embarrassment and uneasiness, as if its author were ashamed of the seriousness with which he adheres to his theme. Surely Miss Bankhead's asides to the audience and the whole conceit that the end of the world is only a play that some actors are putting on serve no other purpose than to relieve the author's sense of awkwardness. "I don't understand a word of this play," Miss Bankhead complains again and again, but actually there is not a word in the play which Miss Bankhead cannot and does not perfectly comprehend. All this aspect of the play is, to put it frankly, fraudulent, an illusionist's trick; an elaborate system of mystification has been, as it were, installed in the theater in order to persuade the audience that it is witnessing a complex and difficult play, while what is really being shown on the stage is of a childish and almost painful naivete. To some extent, the illusion is successful: middlebrow members of the audience are, as usual, readily induced to disregard the evidence of their own ears and consider the play either monstrously profound or monstrously bewildering. Simpler people, however, who have never heard of Aristotle, see nothing difficult about it. They accept the performance as a sort of lark, which at best it is, a bright children's pantomime, full of boldly costumed figures out of Bible history. As the daily drama critics have said, over and over, with all the relish of Lucifer admitting a new registrant into hell, Mr. Wilder has become a *real* man of the theater.

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OF THIS TIME, OF THAT PLACE

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into the interior. At last he held in his hand what he was after, a torn and crumpled copy of *Life and Letters*.

"I learned it from here," he said, holding it out.

Howe looked at him sharply, his hackles a little up. But the boy's face was not only perfectly innocent, it even shone with a conscious admiration. Apparently nothing of the import of the essay had touched him except the wonderful fact that his teacher was a "man of letters." Yet this seemed too stupid and Howe, to test it, said, "The man who wrote that doesn't think it's wonderful."

Tertan made a moist hissing sound as he cleared his mouth of saliva. His head, oddly loose on his neck, wove a pattern of contempt in the air. "A critic," he said, "who admits *prima facie* that he does not understand." Then he said grandly, "It is the inevitable fate."

It was absurd, yet Howe was not only aware of the absurdity but of a tension suddenly and wonderfully relaxed. Now that the "attack" was on the table between himself and this strange boy and subject to the boy's funny and absolutely certain contempt, the hidden force of his feeling was revealed to him in the very moment that it vanished. All unsuspected, there had been a film over the world, a transparent but discoloring haze of danger. But he had no time to stop over the brightened aspect of things. Tertan was going on. "I also am a man of letters. Putative."

"You have written a good deal?" Howe meant to be no more than polite and he was surprised at the tenderness he heard in his words.

Solemnly the boy nodded, threw back the dank lock and sucked in a deep anticipatory breath. "First, a work of homiletics, which is a defense of the principles of religious optimism against the pessimism of Schopenhauer and the humanism of Nietzsche."

"Humanism? Why do you call it humanism?"

"It is my nomenclature for making a deity of man," Tertan replied negligently. "Then three fictional works, novels. And numerous essays in science, combating materialism. Is it your duty to read these if I bring them to you?"

Howe answered simply, "No, it isn't exactly my duty but I shall be happy to read them."

Tertan stood up and remained silent. He rested his bag on the chair. With a certain compunction—for it did not seem entirely proper that, of two men of letters, one should have the right to blue-pencil the other, to grade him or to question the quality of his "sentence structure"—Howe reached for Tertan's papers. But before he could take them up, the boy suddenly made his bow-to-Abelard, the stiff inclination of the body with the hands seeming to emerge from the scholar's gown. Then he was gone.

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But after his departure something was still left of him. The timbre of his curious sentences, the downright finality of so quaint a phrase as "It is the inevitable fate" still rang in the air. Howe gave the warmth of his feeling to the new visitor who stood at the door announcing himself with a genteel clearing of the throat.

"Dr. Howe, I believe?" the student said. A large hand advanced into the room and grasped Howe's hand. "Blackburn, sir, Theodore Blackburn, vice-president of the Student Council. A great pleasure, sir."

Out of a pair of ruddy cheeks a pair of small eyes twinkled good-naturedly. The large face, the large body were not so much fat as beefy and suggested something "typical," monk, politician, or innkeeper.

Blackburn took the seat beside Howe's desk. "I may have seemed to introduce myself in my public capacity, sir," he said. "But it is really as an individual that I came to see you. That is to say, as one of your students to be."

He spoke with an "English" intonation and he went on, "I was once an English major, sir."

For a moment Howe was startled, for the roast-beef look of the boy and the manner of his speech gave a second's credibility to one sense of his statement. Then the collegiate meaning of the phrase asserted itself, but some perversity made Howe say what was not really in good taste even with so forward a student, "Indeed? What regiment?"

Blackburn stared and then gave a little pouf-pouf of laughter. He waved the misapprehension away. "*Very* good, sir. It certainly is an ambiguous term." He chuckled in appreciation of Howe's joke, then cleared his throat to put it aside. "I look forward to taking your course in the romantic poets, sir," he said earnestly. "To me the romantic poets are the very crown of English literature."

Howe made a dry sound, and the boy, catching some meaning in it, said, "Little as I know them, of course. But even Shakespeare who is so dear to us of the Anglo-Saxon tradition is in a sense but the preparation for Shelley, Keats and Byron. And Wadsworth."

Almost sorry for him, Howe dropped his eyes. With some embarrassment, for the boy was not actually his student, he said softly, "Wordsworth."

"Sir?"

"Wordsworth, not Wadsworth. You said Wadsworth."

"Did I, sir?" Gravely he shook his head to rebuke himself for the error. "Wordsworth, of course—slip of the tongue." Then, quite in command again, he went on. "I have a favor to ask of you, Dr. Howe. You see, I began my college course as an English major,"—he smiled—"as I said."

"Yes?"

"But after my first year I shifted. I shifted to the social sciences. Sociology and government—I find them stimulating and very *real*." He

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paused, out of respect for reality. "But now I find that perhaps I have neglected the other side."

"The other side?" Howe said.

"Imagination, fancy, culture. A well rounded man." He trailed off as if there were perfect understanding between them. "And so, sir, I have decided to end my senior year with your course in the romantic poets."

His voice was filled with an indulgence which Howe ignored as he said flatly and gravely, "But that course isn't given until the spring term."

"Yes, sir, and that is where the favor comes in. Would you let me take your romantic prose course? I can't take it for credit, sir, my program is full, but just for background it seems to me that I ought to take it. I do hope," he concluded in a manly way, "that you will consent."

"Well, it's no great favor, Mr. Blackburn. You can come if you wish, though there's not much point in it if you don't do the reading."

The bell rang for the hour and Howe got up.

"May I begin with this class, sir?" Blackburn's smile was candid and boyish.

Howe nodded carelessly and together, silently, they walked to the classroom down the hall. When they reached the door Howe stood back to let his student enter, but Blackburn moved adroitly behind him and grasped him by the arm to urge him over the threshold. They entered together with Blackburn's hand firmly on Howe's biceps, the student inducting the teacher into his own room. Howe felt a surge of temper rise in him and almost violently he disengaged his arm and walked to the desk, while Blackburn found a seat in the front row and smiled at him.

II.

The question was, At whose door must the tragedy be laid?

All night the snow had fallen heavily and only now was abating in sparse little flurries. The windows were valanced high with white. It was very quiet, something of the quiet of the world had reached the class and Howe found that everyone was glad to talk or listen. In the room there was a comfortable sense of pleasure in being human.

Casebeer believed that the blame for the tragedy rested with heredity. Picking up the book he read, "The sins of the fathers are visited on their children." This opinion was received with general favor. Nevertheless Johnson ventured to say that the fault was all Pastor Manders' because the Pastor had made Mrs. Alving go back to her husband and was always hiding the truth. To this Hibbard objected with logic enough, "Well then, it was really all her husband's fault. He *did* all the bad things." De Witt, his face bright with an impatient idea, said that the fault was all society's. "By society I don't mean upper-crust society," he said. He looked around a little defiantly, taking in any members of the class who might be members of upper-crust society. "Not in that sense. I mean the social unit."

Howe nodded and said, "Yes, of course."

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"If the society of the time had progressed far enough in science," De Witt went on, "then there would be no problem for Mr. Ibsen to write about. Captain Alving plays around a little, gives way to perfectly natural biological urges, and he gets a social disease, a venereal disease. If the disease is cured, no problem. Invent salvarsan and the disease is cured. The problem of heredity disappears and li'l Oswald just doesn't get paresis. No paresis, no problem—no problem, no play."

This was carrying the ark into battle and the class looked at De Witt with respectful curiosity. It was his usual way and on the whole they were sympathetic with his struggle to prove to Howe that science was better than literature. Still, there was something in his reckless manner that alienated them a little.

"Or take birth-control, for instance," De Witt went on. "If Mrs. Alving had some knowledge of contraception, she wouldn't have had to have li'l Oswald at all. No li'l Oswald, no play."

The class was suddenly quieter. In the back row Stettenhover swung his great football shoulders in a righteous sulking gesture, first to the right, then to the left. He puckered his mouth ostentatiously. Intellect was always ending up by talking dirty.

Tertan's hand went up and Howe said, "Mr. Tertan." The boy shambled to his feet and began his long characteristic gulp. Howe made a motion with his fingers, as small as possible, and Tertan ducked his head and smiled in apology. He sat down. The class laughed. With more than half the term gone, Tertan had not been able to remember that one did not rise to speak. He seemed unable to carry on the life of the intellect without this mark of respect for it. To Howe the boy's habit of rising seemed to accord with the formal shabbiness of his dress. He never wore the casual sweaters and jackets of his classmates. Into the free and comfortable air of the college classroom he brought the stuffy sordid strictness of some crowded metropolitan high school.

"Speaking from one sense," Tertan began slowly, "there is no blame ascribable. From the sense of determinism, who can say where the blame lies? The preordained is the preordained and it cannot be said without rebellion against the universe, a palpable absurdity."

In the back row Stettenhover slumped suddenly in his seat, his heels held out before him, making a loud dry disgusted sound. His body sank until his neck rested on the back of his chair. He folded his hands across his belly and looked significantly out of the window, exasperated not only with Tertan but with Howe, with the class, with the whole system designed to encourage this kind of thing. There was a certain insolence in the movement and Howe flushed. As Tertan continued to speak, Howe stalked casually toward the window and placed himself in the line of Stettenhover's vision. He stared at the great fellow, who pretended not to see him. There was so much power in the big body, so much contempt in the Greek-athlete face under the crisp Greek-athlete curls, that Howe felt almost physical fear. But at last Stettenhover admitted him to focus and

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under his disapproving gaze sat up with slow indifference. His eyebrows raised high in resignation, he began to examine his hands. Howe relaxed and turned his attention back to Tertan.

"Flux of existence," Tertan was saying, "produces all things, so that judgment wavers. Beyond the phenomena, what? But phenomena are adumbrated and to them we are limited."

Howe saw it for a moment as perhaps it existed in the boy's mind—the world of shadows which are cast by a great light upon a hidden reality as in the old myth of the Cave. But the little brush with Stettenhover had tired him and he said irritably, "But come to the point, Mr. Tertan."

He said it so sharply that some of the class looked at him curiously. For three months he had gently carried Tertan through his verbosities, to the vaguely respectful surprise of the other students, who seemed to conceive that there existed between this strange classmate and their teacher some special understanding from which they were content to be excluded. Tertan looked at him mildly and at once came brilliantly to the point. "This is the summation of the play," he said and took up his book and read, " 'Your poor father never found any outlet for the overmastering joy of life that was in him. And I brought no holiday into his home, either. Everything seemed to turn upon duty and I am afraid I made your poor father's home unbearable to him, Oswald.' Spoken by Mrs. Alving."

Yes, that was surely the "summation" of the play and Tertan had hit it, as he hit, deviously and eventually, the literary point of almost everything. But now, as always, he was wrapping it away from sight. "For most mortals," he said, "there are only joys of biological urgings, gross and crass, such as the sensuous Captain Alving. For certain few there are the transmutations beyond these to a contemplation of the utter whole."

Oh, the boy was mad. And suddenly the word, used in hyperbole, intended almost for the expression of exasperated admiration, became literal. Now that the word was used, it became simply apparent to Howe that Tertan was mad.

It was a monstrous word and stood like a bestial thing in the room. Yet it so completely comprehended everything that had puzzled Howe, it so arranged and explained what for three months had been perplexing him that almost at once its horror became domesticated. With this word Howe was able to understand why he had never been able to communicate to Tertan the value of a single criticism or correction of his wild, verbose themes. Their conferences had been frequent and long but had done nothing to reduce to order the splendid confusion of the boy's ideas. Yet, impossible though its expression was, Tertan's incandescent mind could always strike for a moment into some dark corner of thought.

And now it was suddenly apparent that it was not a faulty rhetoric that Howe had to contend with. With his new knowledge he looked at

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Tertan's face and wondered how he could have so long deceived himself. Tertan was still talking and the class had lapsed into a kind of patient unconsciousness, a coma of respect for words which, for all that most of them knew, might be profound. Almost with a suffusion of shame, Howe believed that in some dim way the class had long agc had some intimation of Tertan's madness. He reached out as decisively as he could to seize the thread of Tertan's discourse before it should be entangled further.

"Mr. Tertan says that the blame must be put upon whoever kills the joy of living in another. We have been assuming that Captain Alving was a wholly bad man, but what if we assume that he became bad only because Mrs. Alving, when they were first married, acted toward him in the prudish way she says she did?"

It was a ticklish idea to advance to freshmen and perhaps not profitable. Not all of them were following.

"That would put the blame on Mrs. Alving herself, whom most of you admire. And she herself seems to think so." He glanced at his watch. The hour was nearly over. "What do you think, Mr. De Witt?"

De Witt rose to the idea, he wanted to know if society couldn't be blamed for educating Mrs. Alving's temperament in the wrong way. Casebeer was puzzled, Stettenhover continued to look at his hands until the bell rang.

Tertan, his brows louring in thought, was making as always for a private word. Howe gathered his books and papers to leave quickly. At this moment of his discovery and with the knowledge still raw, he could not engage himself with Tertan. Tertan sucked in his breath to prepare for speech and Howe made ready for the pain and confusion. But at that moment Casebeer detached himself from the group with which he had been conferring and which he seemed to represent. His constituency remained at a tactful distance. The mission involved the time of an assigned essay. Casebeer's presentation of the plea—it was based on the freshmen's heavy duties at the fraternities during Carnival Week—cut across Tertan's preparations for speech. "And so some of us fellows thought," Casebeer concluded with heavy solemnity, "that we could do a better job, give our minds to it more, if we had more time."

Tertan regarded Casebeer with mingled curiosity and revulsion. Howe not only said that he would postpone the assignment but went on to talk about the Carnival and even drew the waiting constituency into the conversation. He was conscious of Tertan's stern and astonished stare, then of his sudden departure.

Now that the fact was clear, Howe knew that he must act on it. His course was simple enough. He must lay the case before the Dean. Yet he hesitated. His feeling for Tertan must now, certainly, be in some way invalidated. Yet could he, because of a word, hurry to assign to official and reasonable solicitude what had been, until this moment, so various

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and warm? He could at least delay and, by moving slowly, lend a poor grace to the necessary, ugly act of making his report.

It was with some notion of keeping the matter in his own hands that he went to the Dean's office to look up Tertan's records. In the outer office the Dean's secretary greeted him brightly and at his request brought him the manila folder with the small identifying photograph pasted in the corner. She laughed. "He was looking for the birdie in the wrong place," she said.

Howe leaned over her shoulder to look at the picture. It was as bad as all the Dean's-office photographs were, but it differed from all that Howe had ever seen. Tertan, instead of looking into the camera, as no doubt he had been bidden, had, at the moment of exposure, turned his eyes upward. His mouth, as though conscious of the trick played on the photographer, had the sly superior look that Howe knew.

The secretary was fascinated by the picture. "What a funny boy," she said. "He looks like Tartuffe!"

And so he did, with the absurd piety of the eyes and the conscious slyness of the mouth and the whole face bloated by the bad lens.

"Is he *like* that?" the secretary said.

"Like Tartuffe? No."

From the photograph there was little enough comfort to be had. The records themselves gave no clue to madness, though they suggested sadness enough. Howe read of a father, Stanislaus Tertan, born in Budapesth and trained in engineering in Berlin, once employed by the Hercules Chemical Corporation—this was one of the factories that dominated the sound end of the town—but now without employment. He read of a mother Erminie (Youngfellow) Tertan, born in Manchester, educated at a Normal School at Leeds, now housewife by profession. The family lived on Greenbriar Street which Howe knew as a row of once elegant homes near what was now the factory district. The old mansions had long ago been divided into small and primitive apartments. Of Ferdinand himself there was little to learn. He lived with his parents, had attended a Detroit high school and had transferred to the local school in his last year. His rating for intelligence, as expressed in numbers, was high, his scholastic record was remarkable, he held a college scholarship for his tutition.

Howe laid the folder on the secretary's desk. "Did you find what you wanted to know?" she asked.

The phrases from Tertan's momentous first theme came back to him. "Tertan I am, but what is Tertan? Of this time, of that place, of some parentage, what does it matter?"

"No, I didn't find it," he said.

Now that he had consulted the sad half-meaningless record he knew all the more firmly that he must not give the matter out of his own hands. He must not release Tertan to authority. Not that he anticipated from the Dean anything but the greatest kindness for Tertan. The Dean

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would have the experience and skill which he himself could not have. One way or another the Dean could answer the question, "What is Tertan?" Yet this was precisely what he feared. He alone could keep alive—not forever but for a somehow important time—the question, "What is Tertan?" He alone could keep it still a question. Some sure instinct told him that he must not surrender the question to a clean official desk in a clear official light to be dealt with, settled and closed.

He heard himself saying, "Is the Dean busy at the moment? I'd like to see him."

His request came thus unbidden, even forbidden, and it was one of the surprising and startling incidents of his life. Later, when he reviewed the events, so disconnected in themselves or so merely odd, of the story that unfolded for him that year, it was over this moment, on its face the least notable, that he paused longest. It was frequently to be with fear and never without a certainty of its meaning in his own knowledge of himself that he would recall this simple, routine request and the feeling of shame and freedom it gave him as he sent everything down the official chute. In the end, of course, no matter what he did to "protect" Tertan, he would have had to make the same request and lay the matter on the Dean's clean desk. But it would always be a landmark of his life that, at the very moment when he was rejecting the official way, he had been, without will or intention, so gladly drawn to it.

After the storm's last delicate flurry, the sun had come out. Reflected by the new snow, it filled the office with a golden light which was almost musical in the way it made all the commonplace objects of efficiency shine with a sudden sad and noble significance. And the light, now that he noticed it, made the utterance of his perverse and unwanted request even more momentous.

The secretary consulted the engagement pad. "He'll be free any minute. Don't you want to wait in the parlor?"

She threw open the door of the large and pleasant room in which the Dean held his Committee meetings and in which his visitors waited. It was designed with a homely elegance on the masculine side of the eighteenth century manner. There was a small coal-fire in the grate and the handsome mahogany table was strewn with books and magazines. The large windows gave on the snowy lawn and there was such a fine width of window that the white casements and walls seemed at this moment but a continuation of the snow, the snow but an extension of casement and walls. The outdoors seemed taken in and made safe, the indoors seemed luxuriously freshened and expanded.

Howe sat down by the fire and lighted a cigarette. The room had its intended effect upon him. He felt comfortable and relaxed, yet nicely organized, some young diplomatic agent of the eighteenth century, the newly fledged Swift carrying out Sir William Temple's business. The rawness of Tertan's case quite vanished. He crossed his legs and reached for a magazine.

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It was that famous issue of *Life and Letters* that his idle hand had found and his blood raced as he sifted through it and the shape of his own name, Joseph Howe, sprang out at him, still cabalistic in its power. He tossed the magazine back on the table as the door of the Dean's office opened and the Dean ushered out Theodore Blackburn.

"Ah, Joseph!" the Dean said.

Blackburn said, "Good morning, Doctor." Howe winced at the title and caught the flicker of amusement over the Dean's face. The Dean stood with his hand high on the door-jamb and Blackburn, still in the doorway, remained standing almost under his long arm.

Howe nodded briefly to Blackburn, snubbing his eager deference. "Can you give me a few minutes?" he said to the Dean.

"All the time you want. Come in." Before the two men could enter the office, Blackburn claimed their attention with a long full "Er." As they turned to him, Blackburn said, "Can *you* give *me* a few minutes, Dr. Howe?" His eyes sparkled at the little audacity he had committed, the slightly impudent play with hierarchy. Of the three of them Blackburn kept himself the lowest, but he reminded Howe of his subaltern relation to the Dean.

"I mean, of course," Blackburn went on easily, "when you've finished with the Dean."

"I'll be in my office shortly," Howe said, turned his back on the ready "Thank you, sir," and followed the Dean into the inner room.

"Energetic boy," said the Dean. "A bit beyond himself but very energetic. Sit down."

The Dean lighted a cigarette, leaned back in his chair, sat easy and silent for a moment, giving Howe no signal to go ahead with business. He was a young Dean, not much beyond forty, a tall handsome man with sad, ambitious eyes. He had been a Rhodes scholar. His friends looked for great things from him and it was generally said that he had notions of education which he was not yet ready to try to put into practice.

His relaxed silence was meant as a compliment to Howe. He smiled and said, "What's the business, Joseph?"

"Do you know Tertan—Ferdinand Tertan, a freshman?"

The Dean's cigarette was in his mouth and his hands were clasped behind his head. He did not seem to search his memory for the name. He said, "What about him?"

Clearly the Dean knew something and he was waiting for Howe to tell him more. Howe moved only tentatively. Now that he was doing what he had resolved not to do, he felt more guilty at having been so long deceived by Tertan and more need to be loyal to his error.

"He's a strange fellow," he ventured. He said stubbornly, "In a strange way he's very brilliant." He concluded, "But very strange."

The springs of the Dean's swivel chair creaked as he came out of his sprawl and leaned forward to Howe. "Do you mean he's so strange that it's something you could give a name to?"

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Howe looked at him stupidly. "What do you mean?" he said.

"What's his trouble?" the Dean said more neutrally.

"He's very brilliant, in a way. I looked him up and he has a top intelligence rating. But somehow, and it's hard to explain just how, what he says is always on the edge of sense and doesn't quite make it."

The Dean looked at him and Howe flushed up. The Dean had surely read Woolley on the subject of "the Howes" and the *tour d'ivresse.* Was that quick glance ironical?

The Dean picked up some papers from his desk and Howe could see that they were in Tertan's impatient scrawl. Perhaps the little gleam in the Dean's glance had come only from putting facts together.

"He sent me this yesterday," the Dean said. "After an interview I had with him. I haven't been able to do more than glance at it. When you said what you did, I realized there was something wrong."

Twisting his mouth, the Dean looked over the letter. "You seem to be involved," he said without looking up. "By the way, what did you give him at mid-term?"

Flushing, setting his shoulders, Howe said firmly, "I gave him A-minus."

The Dean chuckled. "Might be a good idea if some of our nicer boys went crazy—just a little." He said, "Well," to conclude the matter and handed the papers to Howe. "See if this is the same thing you've been finding. Then we can go into the matter again."

Before the fire in the parlor, in the chair that Howe had been occupying, sat Blackburn. He sprang to his feet as Howe entered.

"I said my office, Mr. Blackburn." Howe's voice was sharp. Then he was almost sorry for the rebuke, so clearly and naively did Blackburn seem to relish his stay in the parlor, close to authority.

"I'm in a bit of a hurry, sir," he said, "and I did want to be sure to speak to you, sir."

He was really absurd, yet fifteen years from now he would have grown up to himself, to the assurance and mature beefiness. In banks, in consular offices, in brokerage firms, on the bench, more seriously affable, a little sterner, he would make use of his ability to be administered by his job. It was almost reassuring. Now he was exercising his too-great skill on Howe. "I owe you an apology, sir," he said.

Howe knew that he did but he showed surprise.

"I mean, Doctor, after your having been so kind about letting me attend your class, I stopped coming." He smiled in deprecation. "Extra-curricular activities take up so much of my time. I'm afraid I undertook more than I could perform."

Howe had noticed the absence and had been a little irritated by it after Blackburn's elaborate plea. It was an absence that might be interpreted as a comment on the teacher. But there was only one way for him to answer. "You've no need to apologize," he said. "It's wholly your affair."

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Blackburn beamed. "I'm so glad you feel that way about it, sir. I was worried you might think I had stayed away because I was influenced by ——" He stopped and lowered his eyes.

Astonished, Howe said, "Influenced by what?"

"Well, by ——" Blackburn hesitated and for answer pointed to the table on which lay the copy of *Life and Letters*. Without looking at it, he knew where to direct his hand. "By the unfavorable publicity, sir." He hurried on. "And that brings me to another point, sir. I am vice-president of Quill and Scroll, sir, the student literary society, and I wonder if you would address us. You could read your own poetry, sir, and defend your own point of view. It would be very interesting."

It was truly amazing. Howe looked long and cruelly into Blackburn's face, trying to catch the secret of the mind that could have conceived this way of manipulating him, this way so daring and inept—but not entirely inept—with its malice so without malignity. The face did not yield its secret. Howe smiled broadly and said, "Of course I don't think you were influenced by the unfavorable publicity."

"I'm still going to take—regularly, for credit—your romantic poets course next term," Blackburn said.

"Don't worry, my dear fellow, don't worry about it."

Howe started to leave and Blackburn stopped him with, "But about Quill, sir?"

"Suppose we wait until next term? I'll be less busy then."

And Blackburn said, "Very good, sir, and thank you."

In his office the little encounter seemed less funny to Howe, was even in some indeterminate way disturbing. He made an effort to put it from his mind by turning to what was sure to disturb him more, the Tertan letter read in the new interpretation. He found what he had always found, the same florid leaps beyond fact and meaning, the same headlong certainty. But as his eye passed over the familiar scrawl it caught his own name and for the second time that hour he felt the race of his blood.

"The Paraclete," Tertan had written to the Dean, "from a Greek word meaning to stand in place of, but going beyond the primitive idea to mean traditionally the helper, the one who comforts and assists, cannot without fundamental loss be jettisoned. Even if taken no longer in the supernatural sense, the concept remains deeply in the human consciousness inevitably. Humanitarianism is no reply, for not every man stands in the place of every other man for this other's comrade comfort. But certain are chosen out of the human race to be the consoler of some other. Of these, for example, is Joseph Barker Howe, Ph.D. Of intellects not the first yet of true intellect and lambent instructions, given to that which is intuitive and irrational, not to what is logical in the strict word, what is judged by him is of the heart and not the head. Here is one chosen, in that he chooses himself to stand in the place of another for comfort and consolation. To him more than another I give my gratitude,

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with all respect to our Dean who reads this, a noble man, but merely dedicated, not consecrated. But not in the aspect of the Paraclete only is Dr. Joseph Barker Howe established, for he must be the Paraclete to another aspect of himself, that which is driven and persecuted by the lack of understanding in the world at large, so that he in himself embodies the full history of man's tribulations and, overflowing upon others, notably the present writer, is the ultimate end."

This was love. There was no escape from it. Try as Howe might to remember that Tertan was mad and all his emotions invalidated, he could not destroy the effect upon him of his student's stern, affectionate regard. He had betrayed not only a power of mind but a power of love. And however firmly he held before his attention the fact of Tertan's madness, he could do nothing to banish the physical sensation of gratitude he felt. He had never thought of himself as "driven and persecuted" and he did not now. But still he could not make meaningless his sensation of gratitude. The pitiable Tertan sternly pitied him, and comfort came from Tertan's never-to-be-comforted mind.

III.

In an academic community, even an efficient one, official matters move slowly. The term drew to a close with no action in the case of Tertan, and Joseph Howe had to confront a curious problem. How should he grade his strange student, Tertan?

Tertan's final examination had been no different from all his other writing, and what did one "give" such a student? De Witt must have his A, that was clear. Johnson would get a B. With Casebeer it was a question of a B-minus or a C-plus, and Stettenhover, who had been crammed by the team tutor to fill half a blue-book with his thin feminine scrawl, would have his C-minus which he would accept with mingled indifference and resentment. But with Tertan it was not so easy.

The boy was still in the college process and his name could not be omitted from the grade sheet. Yet what should a mind under suspicion of madness be graded? Until the medical verdict was given, it was for Howe to continue as Tertan's teacher and to keep his judgment pedagogical. Impossible to give him an F: he had not failed. B was for Johnson's stolid mediocrity. He could not be put on the edge of passing with Stettenhover, for he exactly did not pass. In energy and richness of intellect he was perhaps even De Witt's superior, and Howe toyed grimly with the notion of giving him an A, but that would lower the value of the A De Witt had won with his beautiful and clear, if still arrogant, mind. There was a notation which the Registrar recognized—Inc. for Incomplete and in the horrible comedy of the situation, Howe considered that. But really only a mark of M for Mad would serve.

In his perplexity, Howe sought the Dean, but the Dean was out of town. In the end, he decided to maintain the A-minus he had given Tertan at midterm. After all, there had been no falling away from that quality. He entered it on the grade sheet with something like bravado.

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Academic time moves quickly. A college year is not really a year, lacking as it does three months. And it is endlessly divided into units which, at their beginning, appear larger than they are—terms, half-terms, months, weeks. And the ultimate unit, the hour, is not really an hour, lacking as it does ten minutes. And so the new term advanced rapidly and one day the fields about the town were all brown, cleared of even the few thin patches of snow which had lingered so long.

Howe, as he lectured on the romantic poets, became conscious of Blackburn emanating wrath. Blackburn did it well, did it with enormous dignity. He did not stir in his seat, he kept his eyes fixed on Howe in perfect attention, but he abstained from using his notebook, there was no mistaking what he proposed to himself as an attitude. His elbow on the writing-wing of the chair, his chin on the curled fingers of his hand, he was the embodiment of intellectual indignation. He was thinking his own thoughts, would give no public offence, yet would claim his due, was not to be intimidated. Howe knew that he would present himself at the end of the hour.

Blackburn entered the office without invitation. He did not smile, there was no cajolery about him. Without invitation he sat down beside Howe's desk. He did not speak until he had taken the blue-book from his pocket. He said, "What does this mean, sir?"

It was a sound and conservative student tactic. Said in the usual way it meant, "How could you have so misunderstood me?" or "What does this mean for my future in the course?" But there were none of the humbler tones in Blackburn's way of saying it.

Howe made the established reply, "I think that's for you to tell me."

Blackburn continued icy. "I'm sure I can't, sir."

There was a silence between them. Both dropped their eyes to the blue-book on the desk. On its cover Howe had pencilled: "F. This is very poor work."

Howe picked up the blue-book. There was always the possibility of injustice. The teacher may be bored by the mass of papers and not wholly attentive. A phrase, even the student's handwriting, may irritate him unreasonably. "Well," said Howe, "let's go through it."

He opened the first page. "Now here: you write, 'In "The Ancient Mariner," Coleridge lives in and transports us to a honey-sweet world where all is rich and strange, a world of charm to which we can escape from the humdrum existence of our daily lives, the world of romance. Here, in this warm and honey-sweet land of charming dreams we can relax and enjoy ourselves.' "

Howe lowered the paper and waited with a neutral look for Blackburn to speak. Blackburn returned the look boldly, did not speak, sat stolid and lofty. At last Howe said, speaking gently, "Did you mean that, or were you just at a loss for something to say?"

"You imply that I was just 'bluffing'?" The quotation marks hung palpable in the air about the word.

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"I'd like to know. I'd prefer believing that you were bluffing to believing that you really thought this."

Blackburn's eyebrows went up. From the height of a great and firm-based idea he looked at his teacher. He clasped the crags for a moment and then pounced, craftily, suavely. "Do you mean, Dr. Howe, that there aren't two opinions possible?"

It was superbly done in its air of putting all of Howe's intellectual life into the balance. Howe remained patient and simple. "Yes, many opinions are possible, but not this one. Whatever anyone believes of 'The Ancient Mariner,' no one can in reason believe that it represents a — a honey-sweet world in which we can relax."

"But that is what I *feel*, sir."

This was well done too. Howe said, "Look, Mr. Blackburn. Do you really relax with hunger and thirst, the heat and the sea-serpents, the dead men with staring eyes, Life in Death and the skeletons? Come now, Mr. Blackburn."

Blackburn made no answer and Howe pressed forward. "Now you say of Wordsworth, 'Of peasant stock himself, he turned from the effete life of the salons and found in the peasant the hope of a flaming revolution which would sweep away all the old ideas. This is the subject of his best poems'."

Beaming at his teacher with youthful eagerness, Blackburn said, "Yes, sir, a rebel, a bringer of light to suffering mankind. I see him as a kind of Prothemeus."

"A kind of what?"

"Prothemeus, sir."

"Think, Mr. Blackburn. We were talking about him only today and I mentioned his name a dozen times. You don't mean Prothemeus. You mean—" Howe waited but there was no response.

"You mean Prometheus."

Blackburn gave no assent and Howe took the reins. "You've done a bad job here, Mr. Blackburn, about as bad as could be done." He saw Blackburn stiffen and his genial face harden again. "It shows either a lack of preparation or a complete lack of understanding." He saw Blackburn's face begin to go to pieces and he stopped.

"Oh, sir," Blackburn burst out, "I've never had a mark like this before, never anything below a B, never. A thing like this has never happened to me before."

It must be true, it was a statement too easily verified. Could it be that other instructors accepted such flaunting nonsense? Howe wanted to end the interview. "I'll set it down to lack of preparation," he said. "I know you're busy. That's not an excuse but it's an explanation. Now suppose you really prepare and then take another quiz in two weeks. We'll forget this one and count the other."

Blackburn squirmed with pleasure and gratitude. "Thank you, sir. You're really very kind, very kind."

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Howe rose to conclude the visit. "All right then—in two weeks."

It was that day that the Dean imparted to Howe the conclusion of the case of Tertan. It was simple and a little anticlimactic. A physician had been called in, and had said the word, given the name.

"A classic case, he called it," the Dean said. "Not a doubt in the world," he said. His eyes were full of miserable pity and he clutched at a word. "A classic case, a classic case." To his aid and to Howe's there came the Parthenon and the form of the Greek drama, the Aristotelian logic, Racine and the Well-Tempered Clavichord, the blueness of the Aegean and its clear sky. Classic—that is to say, without a doubt, perfect in its way, a veritable model, and, as the Dean had been told, sure to take a perfectly predictable and inevitable course to a foreknown conclusion.

It was not only pity that stood in the Dean's eyes. For a moment there was fear too. "Terrible," he said, "it is simply terrible."

Then he went on briskly. "Naturally we've told the boy nothing. And naturally we won't. His tuition's paid by his scholarship and we'll continue him on the rolls until the end of the year. That will be kindest. After that the matter will be out of our control. We'll see, of course, that he gets into the proper hands. I'm told there will be no change, he'll go on like this, be as good as this, for four to six months. And so we'll just go along as usual."

So Tertan continued to sit in Section 5 of English 1A, to his classmates still a figure of curiously dignified fun, symbol to most of them of the respectable but absurd intellectual life. But to his teacher he was now very different. He had not changed—he was still the greyhound casting for the scent of ideas and Howe could see that he was still the same Tertan, but he could not feel it. What he felt as he looked at the boy sitting in his accustomed place was the hard blank of a fact. The fact itself was formidable and depressing. But what Howe was chiefly aware of was that he had permitted the metamorphosis of Tertan from person to fact.

As much as possible he avoided seeing Tertan's upraised hand and eager eye. But the fact did not know of its mere factuality, it continued its existence as if it were Tertan, hand up and eye questioning, and one day it appeared in Howe's office with a document.

"Even the spirit who lives egregiously, above the herd, must have its relations with the fellowman," Tertan declared. He laid the document on Howe's desk. It was headed "Quill and Scroll Society of Dwight College. Application for Membership."

"In most ways these are crass minds," Tertan said, touching the paper. "Yet as a whole, bound together in their common love of letters, they transcend their intellectual lacks since it is not a paradox that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

"When are the elections?" Howe asked.

"They take place tomorrow."

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"I certainly hope you will be successful."

"Thank you. Would you wish to implement that hope?" A rather dirty finger pointed to the bottom of the sheet. "A faculty recommender is necessary," Tertan said stiffly, and waited.

"And you wish me to recommend you?"

"It would be an honor."

"You may use my name."

Tertan's finger pointed again. "It must be a written sponsorship, signed by the sponsor." There was a large blank space on the form under the heading, "Opinion of Faculty Sponsor."

This was almost another thing and Howe hesitated. Yet there was nothing else to do and he took out his fountain pen. He wrote, "Mr. Ferdinand Tertan is marked by his intense devotion to letters and by his exceptional love of all things of the mind." To this he signed his name which looked bold and assertive on the white page. It disturbed him, the strange affirming power of a name. With a business-like air, Tertan whipped up the paper, folded it with decision and put it into his pocket. He bowed and took his departure, leaving Howe with the sense of having done something oddly momentous.

And so much now seemed odd and momentous to Howe that should not have seemed so. It was odd and momentous, he felt, when he sat with Blackburn's second quiz before him and wrote in an excessively firm hand the grade of C-minus. The paper was a clear, an indisputable failure. He was carefully and consciously committing a cowardice. Blackburn had told the truth when he had pleaded his past record. Howe had consulted it in the Dean's office. It showed no grade lower than a B-minus. A canvass of some of Blackburn's previous instructors had brought vague attestations to the adequate powers of a student imperfectly remembered and sometimes surprise that his abilities could be questioned at all.

As he wrote the grade, Howe told himself that his cowardice sprang from an unwillingness to have more dealings with a student he disliked. He knew it was simpler than that. He knew he feared Blackburn: that was the absurd truth. And cowardice did not solve the matter after all. Blackburn, flushed with a first success, attacked at once. The minimal passing grade had not assuaged his feelings and he sat at Howe's desk and again the blue-book lay between them. Blackburn said nothing. With an enormous impudence, he was waiting for Howe to speak and explain himself.

At last Howe said sharply and rudely, "Well?" His throat was tense and the blood was hammering in his head. His mouth was tight with anger at himself for his disturbance.

Blackburn's glance was almost baleful. "This is impossible, sir."

"But there it is," Howe answered.

"Sir?" Blackburn had not caught the meaning but his tone was still haughty.

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Impatiently Howe said, "There it is, plain as day. Are you here to complain again?"

"Indeed I am, sir." There was surprise in Blackburn's voice that Howe should ask the question.

"I shouldn't complain if I were you. You did a thoroughly bad job on your first quiz. This one is a little, only a very little, better." This was not true. If anything, it was worse.

"That might be a matter of opinion, sir."

"It is a matter of opinion. Of my opinion."

"Another opinion might be different, sir."

"You really believe that?" Howe said.

"Yes." The omission of the "sir" was monumental.

"Whose, for example?"

"The Dean's, for example." Then the fleshy jaw came forward a little. "Or a certain literary critic's, for example."

It was colossal and almost too much for Blackburn himself to handle. The solidity of his face almost crumpled under it. But he withstood his own audacity and went on. "And the Dean's opinion might be guided by the knowledge that the person who gave me this mark is the man whom a famous critic, the most eminent judge of literature in this country, called a drunken man. The Dean might think twice about whether such a man is fit to teach Dwight students."

Howe said in quiet admonition, "Blackburn, you're mad," meaning no more than to check the boy's extravagance.

But Blackburn paid no heed. He had another shot in the locker. "And the Dean might be guided by the information, of which I have evidence, documentary evidence,"—he slapped his breastpocket twice—"that this same person personally recommended to the college literary society, the oldest in the country, that he personally recommended a student who is crazy, who threw the meeting into an uproar, a psychiatric case. The Dean might take that into account."

Howe was never to learn the details of that "uproar." He had always to content himself with the dim but passionate picture which at that moment sprang into his mind, of Tertan standing on some abstract height and madly denouncing the multitude of Squill and Scroll who howled him down.

He sat quiet a moment and looked at Blackburn. The ferocity had entirely gone from the student's face. He sat regarding his teacher almost benevolently. He had played a good card and now, scarcely at all unfriendly, he was waiting to see the effect. Howe took up the blue-book and negligently sifted through it. He read a page, closed the book, struck out the C-minus and wrote an F.

"Now you may take the paper to the Dean," he said. "You may tell him that after reconsidering it, I lowered the grade."

The gasp was audible. "Oh sir!" Blackburn cried. "Please!" His

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face was agonized. "It means my graduation, my livelihood, my future. Don't do this to me."

"It's done already."

Blackburn stood up. "I spoke rashly, sir, hastily. I had no intention, no real intention, of seeing the Dean. It rests with you—entirely, entirely. I *hope* you will restore the first mark."

"Take the matter to the Dean or not, just as you choose. The grade is what you deserve and it stands."

Blackburn's head dropped. "And will I be failed at midterm, sir?"

"Of course."

From deep out of Blackburn's great chest rose a cry of anguish. "Oh sir, if you want me to go down on my knees to you, I will, I will."

Howe looked at him in amazement.

"I will, I will. On my knees, sir. This mustn't, mustn't happen."

He spoke so literally, meaning so very truly that his knees and exactly his knees were involved and seeming to think that he was offering something of tangible value to his teacher, that Howe, whose head had become icy clear in the nonsensical drama, thought, "The boy is mad," and began to speculate fantastically whether something in himself attracted or developed aberration. He could see himself standing absurdly before the Dean and saying, "I've found another. This time it's the Vice-president of the Council, the manager of the debating team and secretary of Quill and Scroll."

One more such discovery, he thought, and he himself would be discovered! And there, suddenly, Blackburn was on his knees with a thump, his huge thighs straining his trousers, his hand outstretched in a great gesture of supplication.

With a cry, Howe shoved back his swivel chair and it rolled away on its casters half across the little room. Blackburn knelt for a moment to nothing at all, then got to his feet.

Howe rose abruptly. He said, "Blackburn, you will stop acting like an idiot. Dust your knees off, take your paper and get out. You've behaved like a fool and a malicious person. You have half a term to do a decent job. Keep your silly mouth shut and try to do it. Now get out."

Blackburn's head was low. He raised it and there was a pious light in his eyes. "Will you shake hands, sir?" he said. He thrust out his hand.

"I will not," Howe said.

Head and hand sank together. Blackburn picked up his blue-book and walked to the door. He turned and said, "Thank you, sir." His back, as he departed, was heavy with tragedy and stateliness.

IV.

After years of bad luck with the weather, the College had a perfect day for Commencement. It was wonderfully bright, the air so transparent, the wind so brisk that no one could resist talking about it.

As Howe set out for the campus he heard Hilda calling from the back yard. She called, "Professor, professor," and came running to him.

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Howe said, "What's this 'professor' business?"

"Mother told me," Hilda said. "You've been promoted. And I want to take your picture."

"Next year," said Howe. "I won't be a professor until next year. And you know better than to call anybody 'professor'."

"It was just in fun," Hilda said. She seemed disappointed.

"But you can take my picture if you want. I won't look much different next year." Still, it was frightening. It might mean that he was to stay in this town all his life.

Hilda brightened. "Can I take it in this?" she said, and touched the gown he carried over his arm.

Howe laughed. "Yes, you can take it in this."

"I'll get my things and meet you in front of Otis," Hilda said. "I have the background all picked out."

On the campus the Commencement crowd was already large. It stood about in eager, nervous little family groups. As he crossed, Howe was greeted by a student, capped and gowned, glad of the chance to make an event for his parents by introducing one of his teachers. It was while Howe stood there chatting that he saw Tertan.

He had never seen anyone quite so alone, as though a circle had been woven about him to separate him from the gay crowd on the campus. Not that Tertan was not gay, he was the gayest of all. Three weeks had passed since Howe had last seen him, the weeks of examination, the lazy week before Commencement, and this was now a different Tertan. On his head he wore a panama hat, broadbrimmed and fine, of the shape associated with South American planters. He wore a suit of raw silk, luxurious but yellowed with age and much too tight, and he sported a whangee cane. He walked sedately, the hat tilted at a devastating angle, the stick coming up and down in time to his measured tread. He had, Howe guessed, outfitted himself to greet the day in the clothes of that ruined father whose existence was on record in the Dean's office. Gravely and arrogantly he surveyed the scene—in it, his whole bearing seemed to say, but not of it. With his haughty step, with his flashing eye, Tertan was coming nearer. Howe did not wish to be seen. He shifted his position slightly. When he looked again, Tertan was not in sight.

The chapel clock struck the quarter hour. Howe detached himself from his chat and hurried to Otis Hall at the far end of the campus. Hilda had not yet come. He went up into the high portico and, using the glass of the door for a mirror, put on his gown, adjusted the hood on his shoulders and set the mortarboard on his head. When he came down the steps Hilda had arrived.

Nothing could have told him more forcibly that a year had passed than the development of Hilda's photographic possessions from the box camera of the previous fall. By a strap about her neck was hung a leather case, so thick and strong, so carefully stitched and so molded to its contents that it could only hold a costly camera. The appearance was

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deceptive, Howe knew, for he had been present at the Aikens' pre-Christmas conference about its purchase. It was only a fairly good domestic camera. Still, it looked very impressive. Hilda carried another leather case from which she drew a collapsible tripod. Decisively she extended each of its gleaming legs and set it up on the path. She removed the camera from its case and fixed it to the tripod. In its compact efficiency the camera almost had a life of its own, but Hilda treated it with easy familiarity, looked into its eye, glanced casually at its gauges. Then from a pocket she took still another leather case and drew from it a small instrument through which she looked first at Howe, who began to feel inanimate and lost, and then at the sky. She made some adjustment on the instrument, then some adjustment on the camera. She swept the scene with her eye, found a spot and pointed the camera in its direction. She walked to the spot, stood on it and beckoned to Howe. With each new leather case, with each new instrument and with each new adjustment she had grown in ease and now she said, "Joe, will you stand here?"

Obediently Howe stood where he was bidden. She had yet another instrument. She took out a tape-measure on a mechanical spool. Kneeling down before Howe, she put the little metal ring of the tape under the tip of his shoe. At her request, Howe pressed it with his toe. When she had measured her distance, she nodded to Howe who released the tape. At a touch, it sprang back into the spool. "You have to be careful if you're going to get what you want," Hilda said. "I don't believe in all this snap-snap-snapping," she remarked loftily. Howe nodded in agreement, although he was beginning to think Hilda's care excessive.

Now at last the moment had come. Hilda squinted into the camera, moved the tripod slightly. She stood to the side, holding the plunger of the shutter-cable. "Ready," she said. "Will you relax, Joseph, please?" Howe realized that he was standing frozen. Hilda stood poised and precise as a setter, one hand holding the little cable, the other extended with curled dainty fingers like a dancer's, as if expressing to her subject the precarious delicacy of the moment. She pressed the plunger and there was the click. At once she stirred to action, got behind the camera, turned a new exposure. "Thank you," she said. "Would you stand under that tree and let me do a character study with light and shade?"

The childish absurdity of the remark restored Howe's ease. He went to the little tree. The pattern the leaves made on his gown was what Hilda was after. He had just taken a satisfactory position when he heard in the unmistakable voice, "Ah, Doctor! Having your picture taken?"

Howe gave up the pose and turned to Blackburn who stood on the walk, his hands behind his back, a little too large for his bachelor's gown. Annoyed that Blackburn should see him posing for a character study in light and shade, Howe said irritably, "Yes, having my picture taken."

Blackburn beamed at Hilda. "And the little photographer," he

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said. Hilda fixed her eyes on the ground and stood closer to her brilliant and aggressive camera. Blackburn, teetering on his heels, his hands behind his back, wholly prelatical and benignly patient, was not abashed at the silence. At last Howe said, "If you'll excuse us, Mr. Blackburn, we'll go on with the picture."

"Go right ahead, sir. I'm running along." But he only came closer. "Dr. Howe," he said fervently, "I want to tell you how glad I am that I was able to satisfy your standards at last."

Howe was surprised at the hard insulting brightness of his own voice and even Hilda looked up curiously as he said, "Nothing you have ever done has satisfied me and nothing you could ever do would satisfy me, Blackburn."

With a glance at Hilda, Blackburn made a gesture as if to hush Howe—as though all his former bold malice had taken for granted a kind of understanding between himself and his teacher, a secret which must not be betrayed to a third person. "I only meant, sir," he said, "that I was able to pass your course after all."

Howe said, "You didn't pass my course. I passed you out of my course. I passed you without even reading your paper. I wanted to be sure the college would be rid of you. And when all the grades were in and I did read your paper, I saw I was right not to have read it first."

Blackburn presented a stricken face. "It was very bad, sir?"

But Howe had turned away. The paper had been fantastic. The paper had been, if he wished to see it so, mad. It was at this moment that the Dean came up behind Howe and caught his arm. "Hello, Joseph," he said. "We'd better be getting along, it's almost late."

He was not a familiar man, but when he saw Blackburn, who approached to greet him, he took Blackburn's arm too. "Hello, Theodore," he said. Leaning forward on Howe's arm and on Blackburn's, he said, "Hello, Hilda dear." Hilda replied quietly, "Hello, Uncle George."

Still clinging to their arms, still linking Howe and Blackburn, the Dean said, "Another year gone, Joe, and we've turned out another crop. After you've been here a few years, you'll find it reasonably upsetting—you wonder how there can be so many graduating classes while you stay the same. But of course you don't stay the same." Then he said, "Well," sharply, to dismiss the thought. He pulled Blackburn's arm and swung him around to Howe. "Have you heard about Teddy Blackburn?" he asked. "He has a job already, before graduation, the first man of his class to be placed." Expectant of congratulations, Blackburn beamed at Howe. Howe remained silent.

"Isn't that good?" the Dean said. Still Howe did not answer and the Dean, puzzled and put out, turned to Hilda. "That's a very fine-looking camera, Hilda." She touched it with affectionate pride.

"Instruments of precision," said a voice. "Instruments of precision." Of the three with joined arms, Howe was the nearest to Tertan, whose gaze took in all the scene except the smile and the nod which

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Howe gave him. The boy leaned on his cane. The broadbrimmed hat, canting jauntily over his eye, confused the image of his face that Howe had established, suppressed the rigid lines of the ascetic and brought out the baroque curves. It made an effect of perverse majesty.

"Instruments of precision," said Tertan for the last time, addressing no one, making a casual comment to the universe. And it occurred to Howe that Tertan might not be referring to Hilda's equipment. The sense of the thrice-woven circle of the boy's loneliness smote him fiercely. Tertan stood in majestic jauntiness, superior to all the scene, but his isolation made Howe ache with a pity of which Tertan was more the cause than the object, so general and indiscriminate was it.

Whether in his sorrow he made some unintended movement toward Tertan which the Dean checked or whether the suddenly tightened grip on his arm was the Dean's own sorrow and fear, he did not know. Tertan watched them in the incurious way people watch a photograph being taken and suddenly the thought that, to the boy, it must seem that the three were posing for a picture together made Howe detach himself almost rudely from the Dean's grasp.

"I promised Hilda another picture," he announced—needlessly, for Tertan was no longer there, he had vanished in the last sudden flux of visitors who, now that the band had struck up, were rushing nervously to find seats.

"You'd better hurry," the Dean said. "I'll go along, it's getting late for me." He departed and Blackburn walked stately by his side.

Howe again took his position under the little tree which cast its shadow over his face and gown. "Just hurry, Hilda, won't you?" he said. Hilda held the cable at arm's length, her other arm crooked and her fingers crisped. She rose on her toes and said "Ready," and pressed the release. "Thank you," she said gravely and began to dismantle her camera as he hurried off to join the procession.

Books

A Rousseau for the N.A.M.

The Future of Industrial Man. By Peter F. Drucker. John Day. $2.50.

If I had not once met Mr. Drucker, I'd be tempted to think that "Peter F. Drucker" is a pseudonym for Don Coriolano—or perhaps Don Achille? or Don Marcantonio?—anyway, for one of those provincial orators whose eloquence Silone reproduces so wonderfully in his new novel. Like Don Coriolano, Drucker can go on for hours—or pages—ringing rhetorical changes on a half dozen undefined concepts. This kind of oratory demands that everything be stated in the most extreme terms, without qualifications or documentation, so as to permit that dramatic clash of artificial antitheses on a pure conceptual plane which

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is its life-blood. Or more vulgarly—for Mr. Drucker is just as shrewd a judge of the market as Don Coriolano—its stock in trade. His book, which is subtitled "A Conservative Approach," is well timed to capitalize on the mood of doubt and demoralization that is growing among American intellectuals.

If James Burnham, whose *Managerial Revolution* in thesis and method has much in common with *The Future of Industrial Man,* is "a Marx for the managers," Peter Drucker might be called a Rousseau for the National Association of Manufacturers. Politically, he admires the Constitution, thinks Hitler is the fruit of 1789, wants the economic sphere freed from political interference, and fears the extension of governmental and trade union power. Intellectually, he rejects the whole scientific and rationalist movement that began with the French Enlightenment, and blames the present sad state of the world on the pernicious doctrines of Rousseau, Darwin, Marx and Freud. "The only basis of freedom," he writes, "is the Christian concept of man's nature. . . . An assumption of human perfection or of a known or knowable process of human perfectibility leads inescapably to tyranny and totalitarianism."

In a period like this, one must welcome any attempt at broad reformulations of political concepts, from whatever quarter, but it's too bad the forces of darkness can't find more *serious* champions. Burnham's book was balanced on the thin edge of charlatanry; Drucker's goes right over. It would not be worth reviewing, except that a lot of people seem to take it seriously. It is, furthermore, an especially appropriate book to review in the number opening discussion of "the new failure of nerve," not only because Drucker is an obscurantist but also because of the response by the leading journals of American liberalism to this violent attack on their most basic values. The editors of *The Nation, The New Republic,* and *Common Sense* assigned Drucker's book to Reinhold Niebuhr, Jacques Barzun, and Freda Utley respectively. As one might have expected, these particular reviewers treat the book in the most respectful and sympathetic way; their views are appreciations rather than criticisms (though Niebuhr, to be fair, does seem to have some suspicions). It would be hard to find a neater illustration of The New Failure of Nerve, and of the intellectual level of liberal journalism these days.

The Future of Industrial Man is a difficult book to criticise because (1) its concepts are used so impressionistically that several interpretations are possible of most key passages; (2) these concepts are either not related at all to the underlying reality (if any), or else the scanty data given are horribly wrenched about to fit the author's conceptual scheme, so that an enormous labor of modification, rectification and rebuttal on purely factual grounds is necessary before one can even

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begin to grapple with the basic conceptions. Some examples will show what I mean:

p. 44: "It was not until the general strike of 1926 that Transport House (the trade-union headquarters) and the British Iron & Steel Federation began to intervene directly into politics." (This is to support his thesis that the British aristocracy ran English politics up to 1926 to the exclusion of the two main 'economic' classes, labor and big business.) What "directly" means I don't know, but the Trade Union Congress established a Parliamentary Committee in 1869, founded the British Labor Party in 1900, and had 42 seats in Parliament by 1910.

p. 72: "Instead of a cut in production and a boost in price, maximum production and minimum price is the economically most profitable policy in an industrial system. Certainly Henry Ford made *more* money than *all* the monopolists of the old school *together*." (My italics.) In practice, our monopolists (who may be presumed to have at least as keen a nose for profits as Mr. Drucker) have found the opposite policy pays bigger returns. Drucker writes as though only a few antiquated fuddy-duddies pursue what he sneeringly calls "the old-line mercantile theory," whereas *all* the great monopoly industries, from steel and aluminum to telephones, are run on this principle. Henry Ford, finally, is not a monopolist, nor is there any possibility of his profits adding up to more than the *combined* profits of AT&T, Alcoa, U. S. Steel, International Nickel, General Electric, and a dozen other giants of the "old school." (One would never suspect, from statements like the above, that Mr. Drucker is a professional economist who is now a member of the economics faculty of Bennington College.)

p. 114: "Never before in Western history [the fine old Druckerian sweep!] had there been such ample economic provision for the needy and the unemployed as in the Depression years with their doles, relief payments, WPA's, etc." I refer Mr. Drucker to a 17,000 word article on unemployment relief which I published in *The New International* for September, 1939. That year two-thirds of the unemployed lived, or tried to, on state relief payments ranging from $4 a month *per family* in Oklahoma to $32 in New York. A relatively fortunate one-third received a WPA wage averaging $57 a month, or $684 a year, which was 35% below what *the WPA itself* stated to be "a minimum emergency budget." From the alleged fact of "ample economic provision," Drucker argues his usual thesis: that since the unemployed had economic security already, what they really wanted, as non-economic men, was "social status and function." It would be interesting to put the Drucker family on a budget of $684 a year and see whether they worried about social status and function, or food. It would also be interesting to see the effect on Drucker's admiration for American institutions.

p. 123: "To substitute union leadership for corporation management as the foremost if not the decisive power as the union creed demands would not make for any real change in the structure of society." This

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is a classic Druckerian passage. What does the distinction between "foremost" and "decisive" mean? What is the "union creed"? Certainly not the "business unionism" of the AFL and John L. Lewis. The reference must be to the Golden-Murray CIO "union management cooperation" program. But this aspires merely to getting some voice for the union in matters of production, and is almost pathetic in its innocence of intention to effect "a real change in the structure of society." But perhaps by "union creed" revolutionary Marxism is meant. In this case, (1) the aim is clearly broader than to replace corporate by union management, and (2) a real change would be made, for better or worse.

Mr. Drucker's approach to politics is based on two main assumptions:

1. "The exercise of power must be based on an existing and accepted basic principle in order to be legitimate. If there is no such principle, the power becomes despotic and politically unbearable."

2. "A free society and a free government are possible only if there are not one but two competing bases of power: one of social and one of political organization."

These are sensible, if not exactly new, propositions from a conservative point of view. The real point is to apply them to the world today, and here the same kind of ignorance and irresponsibility crop up as in the statements analyzed above. Mr. Drucker's chief criticism of modern American capitalism, for example, is that economic power is no longer "legitimate." "The modern corporation," he writes, "is a *political* institution: its purpose is the creation of legitimate power in the industrial sphere." (I would say that the purpose of the corporate form is rather to pool individual capitals into a more powerful combined capital, and to realize profits thereon; but I realize this is much less dashing than Mr. Drucker's formulation.) However, the corporation has developed in such a way that today "the decisive power, that of the managers, is derived from no one but the managers themselves. . . . The stockholders exercise no influence upon the decisions of the management." And since the managers' power can only legitimately be derived from their position as agents of the owners, the principle of legitimacy is violated.

Thus Drucker agrees with Burnham's managerial thesis, though he puts a moral minus sign where Burnham puts a plus sign. But it would appear that this separation of ownership and management, while undoubtedly of immense significance, has not progressed nearly as far as many writers, including myself, have thought. Berle and Means' *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* is the authority usually quoted, and the one that both Burnham and Drucker rely on. But Berle and Means wrote in 1932, and a more recent (1940) and more detailed and precise study now exists, namely, Monograph No. 29 of the Temporary National Economic Committee: "The Distribution of Ownership in the 200 Largest Nonfinancial Corporations." This study finds (pp. 103-5)

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that only 60 of the 200 corporations "were without a visible center of ownership control," while in the remaining 140 "the blocks of stock in the hands of one interest group were large enough to justify, together with other indications such as representation in the managment, their classification as . . . under ownership control." It is true that 60 of these 140 were controlled by other corporations, and that the study unfortunately does not trace the control of these parent corporations, some or many of which may themselves be without "a visible center of ownership control." On the other hand, there are *invisible* "centers of ownership control" which even a government committee, while it has much better means of extracting information than private investigators like Berle and Means had, may be unable to locate in the maze of dummy shareholdings, trustees, and so on. Also, no less than 40 of these 200 supercorporations are controlled by "one-family interest groups" (Ford, DuPont, Mellon, Rockefeller, Duke, McCormick, etc.).

Drucker, however, writes as though the ownership of big business were spread fairly evenly among millions of small stockholders, and as though U. S. Steel or American Telephone & Telegraph, where no one stockholder has as much as 1% of the total stock outstanding, were the typical great corporations. If these were the case, then indeed the managers would have a field day of "unfounded, unjustified, uncontrolled and irresponsible power." But it would seem that the Mellons' Aluminum Company or the DuPont's General Motors are more typical, and that American big business is owned and controlled by a fairly tightly knit oligarchy. The T.N.E.C. monograph reveals (p. 5) that 60% of the common stock of the 200 corporations was held by the top 1% of the stockholders, and that less than 75,000 of the eight to nine million stockholders in *all* nonfinancial corporations got half the total dividends. It would thus appear that ownership is still concentrated enough to control management, and that, from Drucker's conservative standpoint, the modern big corporation provides a "legitimate" basis for power. The whole question, of course, is very complicated and other important data could be brought up on each side. But in any case there is insufficient basis for such grandiose conclusions as Drucker, and Burnham, have drawn.

I'm sure this will be welcome news to Drucker, who can now withdraw his most serious criticism of the present American economic system. He is not a man to bear down unduly hard on the powers that be. He is even able to find a few kind words for the "illegitimate" managers (who now happily turn out to be legitimate after all). "There has never been," he writes on p. 99 with his usual moderation, "There has never been a more efficient, a more honest, a more capable and conscientious group of rulers than the professional management of the great American corporations today."

The line of Drucker's second proposition is carried back to the Eighteenth Century:

Far from being the roots of freedom, the Enlightenment and the

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> French Revolution were the seeds of the totalitarian despotism which threatens the world today. The fathers and grandfathers of Hitlerism are not medieval feudalism or nineteenth-century romanticism but Bentham and Condorcet, the orthodox economists, and the liberal constitutionalists, Darwin, Freud and the Behaviorists. The great discovery of the Enlightenment was that human reason is absolute. On this discovery were based not only all subsequent liberal creeds but also all the subsequent totalitarian creeds from Rousseau on.

He defines two types of liberalism: the reformist, which is rational and ineffective, and the revolutionary, which is irrational and potent. It is the second type, naturally, that he finds most threatening to his own values. Rousseau is its father, Marx was "the first to follow in his footsteps" and is also "the father of Hitlerism," which is the end-product of the whole tradition. The American Revolution is not in the historical tradition of the Enlightenment and 1789, but on the contrary the first great "conservative counter-revolution" against this tradition. "The separation of government and society originated with the generation of 1776 and 1787—the Founding Fathers of the American Revolution and the liberal conservatives such as Burke in England. . . . We have to return to the principles and to the philosophy of the conservative counter-revolution of 1776 and 1787."

This is at least a broad and stimulating perspective, and it is a pity that Drucker doesn't treat it more seriously. (But then the question arises: *can* it be so treated?) His attempted antithesis between 1776 and 1789 would need vastly more documentation than he gives it. The American revolution *was* much more conservative and moderate than its French counterpart—in fact it was really not a *revolution* at all in the sense of 1789 and 1917—but this was not due to an ideological divergence but to the different historical circumstances of the two movements. The Americans were simply freeing themselves from oppressive foreign rule; there was no entrenched feudal class to overthrow, no revolutionary masses to push on to extremes; far from it being necessary to shatter the existing social and economic forms, as in France, the aim of the revolution was to give an already existing society a chance to develop. In fact, the extraordinary thing is not that the two revolutions should have been different, but that they should have been so similar, that the influence of the Enlightenment should have been strong enough to force the Americans to assume its garb, despite the limited nature of their revolutionary aims. Drucker expatiates a good deal on the beauties of the American Constitution, but he doesn't mention that there is not a single reference in it to God. Nor does he mention that the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 was directly inspired by the Declaration of Independence of 1776. Nor that Jefferson, the ideological leader of the American revolution, retained his sympathy for the French revolution even though the Terror and the Napoleonic period (wherein he differed basically from Burke), and that it was Jefferson, the friend of the Jacobins and the most radical of the American leaders, who in 1800 put

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to rout for two generations the conservative movement led by Drucker's champion, Hamilton. Nor does he quote Jefferson's reaction to Shays' Rebellion: "A little rebellion now and then is a good thing. . . . God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. . . . What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshened from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure."

The way Drucker tugs and sweats to wrench the American revolution into his conservative pattern in fact, reminds me of the similar operations conducted by the Communists in the Popular Front period, when no issue of the *New Masses* was complete without an essay on the striking resemblance of Washington to Lenin, the Minute Men to the International Brigade, and Aaron Burr to Trotsky.

As applied to the world of today, Drucker's conservative approach is either meaningless or else a cover for big-business reaction and eventual fascism. He insists that the separation of political and economic power, and the system of checks-and-balances provided in our Constitution are necessary conditions for freedom. But he never touches on the real problem, which is how these principles can be applied to the social structure that exists today. The rock on which his thesis splits is the concentration of social, economic and political power in the hands of a big-business ruling class, so that no such harmoniously balanced system can be *peacefully* established. (And Drucker is a man of peace.) Furthermore, to advocate the independence of the economic from the political sphere without proposing the expropriation of the big business oligarchy—and Drucker makes no such proposal—is simply to create an ideological shield for big business against any control by the State. The kind of freedom Drucker is interested in is the kind the Liberty League used to preach, and his book might be summarily, and not entirely fairly, described as a Hegelian restatement of the League's doctrine. The essentials of Drucker's position were sketched out many years ago in the chapter on "Juridicial Defense" in Mosca's *The Ruling Class*, and it is perhaps worth noting that Mosca, for all his sincere love of freedom, wound up as a Fascist senator.

There is a lot of talk about morals and ethics in *The Future of Industrial Man*, and Drucker professes to be defending human values against the inhuman absolutism of practically every progressive tendency in the science and politics of the last two centuries. (In a way, I suppose I'm the real conservative in this argument.) But as a good Christian, shouldn't he pay a little more attention to the mote in his own eye before attempting to cast out the beam from the eyes of Rousseau, Darwin, Marx, Freud and Lenin? I notice, for example, that he is extremely sensitive to the totalitarian tendencies in the Great French Revolution, but that he says nothing about the brutality, ignorance and corruption of the deeply religious feudal society it overthrew. He is horrified by the thousands guillotined during the Terror, but he says nothing about the millions who died of slow starvation and inhuman over-work in England

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during the first half of the nineteenth century—a period and a nation, in fact, which he explicitly commends as the triumph of the conservative counter-revolution. He is eloquent about the dangers of State power today, but says nothing about the dangers of concentrated monopoly capitalism. He writes, "There can be no freedom if a man-made absolute is set up as the one and exclusive goal of human endeavor," but he says nothing about a God-made absolute. DWIGHT MACDONALD

Letters

GERMAN CAPITALISM

Sirs:

I am surprised that a man of Dwight Macdonald's keen social insight should take seriously the fallacy that Germany is not a capitalist state. It is the fashion among certain intellectuals to identify capitalism with Laissez Faire economy, and since this no longer exists in Germany and Russia, to conclude that capitalism itself no longer exists in those countries.

Capitalism has passed through various stages of development—mercantile capitalism, finance capitalism and state capitalism. We are now in the era of state capitalism, which manifests varying stages of growth in the different countries, barely beginning in America and full-fledged in Russia. In Germany the state regulates the processes of production and distribution, even to the point of controlling prices, wages, profits and labor supply. But does this do away with the two poles basic to a capitalist economy: wage labor and capital?

If the majority of the people are divorced from the means of production and must sell their labor power in order to live, then certainly wage labor prevails. And the means of production are definitely capital if they are operated with the view to yielding a profit.

State control of labor is another factor which misleads Macdonald into believing that Germany's economy is distinguished from capitalism. When Marx held that a "free" working class is essential to the capitalist mode of production he simply meant a working class freed from independent means of production and left with no other way of obtaining a living except by the sale of labor power. Since Hitler's rise to power, tens of thousands of small independent business people have been "freed" in this sense and transformed into wage workers.

In a socialist society there will be neither wage labor nor capital, but the instruments of production will be commonly owned and democratically managed—not managed by a class of capitalist exploiters as in America, nor by the state integrated with huge capitalist monopolies as in Germany, nor again by a totalitarian state set-up as in Russia.

DETROIT, MICH. CONSTANT READER

—With much of the above, especially the last paragraph, I agree.

But I can't see how the term "capitalism" retains much meaning if it is stretched to cover the New Deal, Nazism, and Stalinism. How would "Constant Reader," for example, distinguish—on the basis of his formulations—slavery and feudalism from capitalism? The slave and the serf were also "freed from independent means of production," and also had to "sell their labor power in order to live." (The "sale" was at least as real as that of the Soviet worker today.) And there was also production of "profit," in the sense of a surplus product which the ruling class appropriated for itself over what was needed to keep the workers alive. In short, these were class, exploitative societies, just as capitalism, fascism, and Stalinism are today, and what "Constant Reader" thinks are the distinctive marks of capitalism are merely the general characteristics of every exploitative economy. The question is under what economic forms surplus produce is extracted from the exploited and appropriated by the exploiters, and it is my contention that the market is this distinctive form in a capitalist society, and that whereas monopoly capitalism merely distorts the market, "state capitalism" destroys it.—DWIGHT MACDONALD

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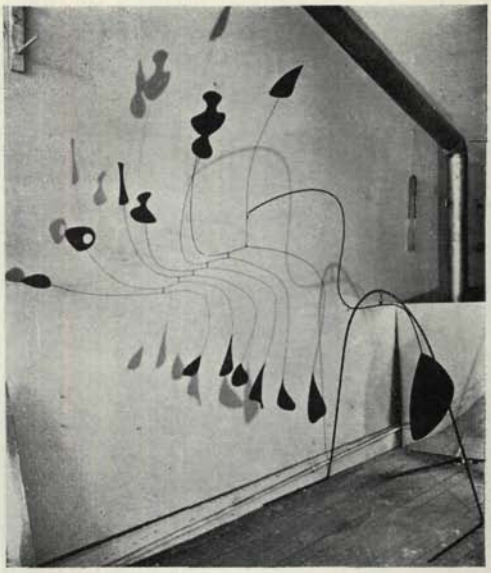

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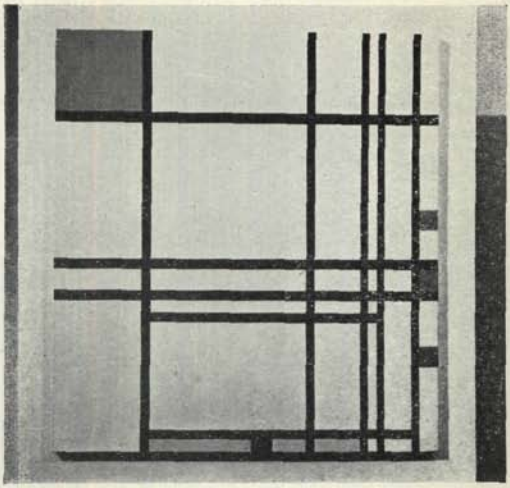

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